MASTERPIECES OF THE SOUTHERN POETS

WALTER NEALE

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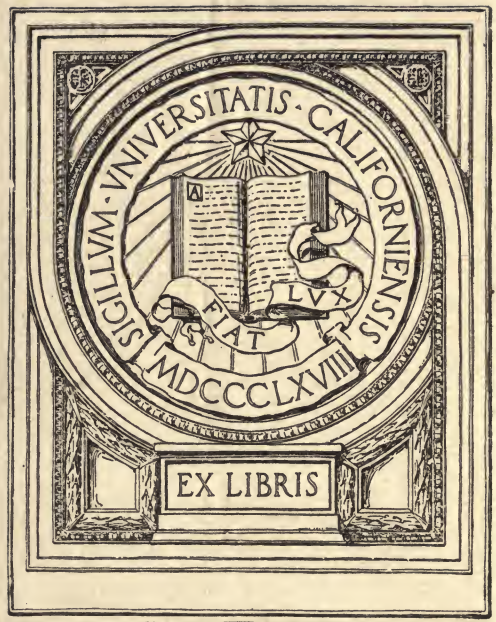
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MASTERPIECES
OF THE
SOUTHERN POETS

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SOUTHERN POETS

BY

WALTER NEALE

Author of "The Sovereignty of the States," "The Betrayal," written in collaboration with Elizabeth H. Hancock, etc. Editor of *Neale's Monthly*, *Neale's Essay Magazine*, *Neale's Quarterly Series of the World's Great Short Stories*, etc., and President of The Neale Publishing Company

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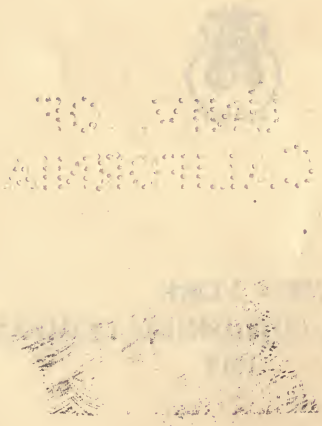

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PREFACE

This volume is not meant to be a comprehensive anthology of Southern verse. Literary milestones, which mark the progress of Southern poetry along the highway that leads to the kingdoms where Poe, Lanier, and their worthy successors are enthroned, properly belong to the Southern anthologies that are museums of history. This work is meant to comprise mainly selections from those lyric masterpieces of the Southern poets that are a part of the living literature of the world.

Southerners began to write poetry soon after they reached the Land of Song. Captain John Smith brought several persons that were destined to be Southern poets along with him to Virginia. Indeed, his own verse was excellent, and even admirable, for the period, and shows that extraordinary man to have been a student of prosody. The poems of these earlier poets are given in various histories of literature.

While preparing this volume I read the greater part of the verse of more than one thousand Southern writers. That no great poem might be overlooked, I wrote to all the editors and to all the booksellers of the South, and to many Southern authors, asking them to give to me the names of all the Southern poets of whom they had ever heard. This they nearly all did. Consequently there are poems in this compilation that are to be found in no

other anthology, and great poets, inadequately represented in other works, if at all, are here given considerable space.

Let him who would take me to task for affirming that Poe and Lanier were succeeded by poets worthy of them have a care. While it is true that Poe was greater than any of the Southern poets of the two centuries that immediately preceded him, he was followed by Lanier, who was Poe's inferior at no point. If the days allotted to ordinary mortals had been vouchsafed Lanier he would still be alive. To his generation belong other great Southern poets,— John Banister Tabb, Will Henry Thompson, and John Lancaster Spalding, for example,— while Henry Timrod, Theodore O'Hara, and Paul Hamilton Hayne were among the older poets of the period. Now there is a new generation of Southern poets, several of whom bid fair to be Lanier's worthy successors,— nay, even now they are very great poets, and in their day may scale the loftiest peak of Parnassus. The poems of the late John Charles McNeill, who died a few years ago at the unripe age of thirty-three, are destined to live so long as American literature shall endure. Another North Carolinian, the late John Henry Boner, after many years of suffering, was cut off in his prime a few years ago. But his poems will live.

Among the living Southern poets are several that I feel impelled to single out for particular mention. From them the world may expect great riches. I refer to Amélie Rives Troubetzkoy, Samuel Minturn Peck, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, Danske Dandridge, Madison Julius Cawein, Ingram Crockett, and Ida Goldsmith Morris. There is

still another great young Southern poet, Olive Tilford Dargan, who is entitled to a place among the world's great poets. As her masterpieces are dramas, which are too long for use in this volume, in which poems are given only as a whole, no selection from her works is to be found here. But her dramas, which are published as books, are easily obtainable. There are other living Southern poets that I might especially mention,— such as Armistead Churchill Gordon, Beverley Dandridge Tucker, William Hamilton Hayne, and others,— but I shall let their own fine poems speak for them.

Although Lanier has been dead more than thirty years, and no copyright has ever existed in many of his poems, his poetical works were collated by his widow a few years ago, then published by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, from which house she receives a royalty. Therefore, while this volume contains all the greater poems of Poe, as there seems to be no one to claim any royalty on the publication of his works, in which no copyright now exists, Lanier is not so well represented. But I have been sorely tempted to publish in this work by far the greater part of gentle Sidney's superb creations.

Here, for the first time, so far as I am aware, the poems of Thomas Jefferson are given a place in any anthology. Yet he wrote poetry that lives and that is widely read in our day. He also wrote "a really admirable treatise on the subject," says Paul Leland Haworth, in *The Bookman* for August, 1910, the treatise being entitled "Thoughts on English Prosody: An Essay on the Art of Poesy," in which "he took the now accepted view that

accent is the basis of English verse, and vigorously combated Dr. Johnson and others who 'have taken quantity for their basis and have mounted English poetry on Greek and Latin feet.'"

Continuing, Haworth says that Jefferson doubtless had written "Lovely Peggy" at the time. "Of this poem, strange to say, very little is known. Just when, why, or about whom it was written, is uncertain." He then says that the poem is not given in either Washington's or Ford's edition of Jefferson's writings, and that he had been unable to find it mentioned in any life of the Sage. "Neither William E. Curtis nor Thomas Watson, his most recent biographers, had ever heard of it until I called their attention to it. The latter was inclined to question its authenticity until I sent him a facsimile of the original, which is now in the Dreer Collection in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Possibly Jefferson may have merely copied the poem, as Worthington C. Ford, the court of last appeals in such matters, suggests; but if he did, who *was* the author?"

But Paul Leicester Ford evidently knew a great deal about "Lovely Peggy,"—so much, in fact, that I do not wonder that Worthington C. Ford should have suggested to Haworth that Jefferson "may have merely copied the poem,"—for Haworth goes on to say, "Evidently Paul Leicester Ford, editor of the best edition of Jefferson's writings, recognized its merits, for I feel sure that while writing 'Janice Meredith' he took it as his model for 'Concerning Thalia.' Not only are the meter and most of the rhymes identical, but Ford incorporated some of

Jefferson's lines almost entire. Take, for example, Ford's stanza:

"'To gaze on her is sweet delight;
"''Tis heaven whene'er she's in my sight,
"'But when she's gone, 'tis endless night —
"'All's dark without my Thalia.'

"Compare this with the fifth stanza of 'Lovely Peggy' and all doubt vanishes. We must not, however, accuse Ford of plagiarism. Rather, we should praise his poetic and historical discrimination. He wished to put a poem in the mouth of his hero, and what could be better than to model such a poem after one written by an actual personage in the period in which the romance falls?"

I am unable to see how Haworth could have thus justified Ford's use of Jefferson's masterpiece, without credit to Jefferson, in a footnote, or elsewhere.

Various conflicting statements with regard to the authorship of the poem have been published. Some of these, I found on investigation, were rashly made by "near" authorities. I have no reason to doubt that "Lovely Peggy" was written by Thomas Jefferson.

WALTER NEALE.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 8, 1912.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

BONER, JOHN HENRY *(North Carolina: 1845-1903)* 23
Gather Leaves and Grasses 23
Remembrance 24
The Moon-Loved Land 25
The Sweet Little Fool 26
BRADENBAUGH, CHARLES *(Maryland: 18——)* . . 28
The Cavalier's Serenade 28
BRUCE, PHILIP ALEXANDER *(Virginia: 1856——)* . 30
Edgar Allan Poe 30
CAWEIN, MADISON JULIUS *(Kentucky: 1865——)* . 31
Attributes 31
Beautiful-Bosomed, O Night 32
Hymn to Spiritual Desire 34
CROCKETT, INGRAM *(Kentucky: 1856——)* 37
Orion 37
The Gossips 38
The Wind 41
Worship 41
DANDRIDGE, DANSKE *(Virginia: 18——)* . . . 43
The Dead Moon 43
The Fairy Camp 46
The Last Night 46
Twilight in the Woods 48
FENOLLOSA, MARY MCNEIL *(Alabama: 18——)* . 51
A Drifting Petal 51
An Old Photograph 51
Miyoko San 52
Sunrise in the Hills of Satsuma 53

PAGE

FINCH, JULIA NEELY *(Alabama: 18— - —)* . . . 55
The Unborn 55
GORDON, ARMISTEAD CHURCHILL *(Virginia: 1855 - —)* 58
"Ah, Si Jeunesse Savait!" 58
Enise 60
Four Feet on a Fender 62
GORDON, JAMES LINDSAY *(Virginia: 1860 - 1904)* . . 65
Lorraine 65
HAYNE, PAUL HAMILTON *(South Carolina: 1830 - 1886)* 68
A Comparison 68
A Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet . . 68
By the Grave of Henry Timrod 70
Sonnet 73
My Study 74
The Mocking-Bird 74
HAYNE, WILLIAM HAMILTON *(South Carolina: 1856 - —)* 76
At Anchor 76
A Cyclone at Sea 76
An Autumn Breeze 77
Exiles 77
On a Bust of Mendelssohn 78
Poem, for the unveiling of the bust of Sidney Lanier, at Macon, Ga., October 17, 1890 . . 78
Scandal 80
HOPE, JAMES BARRON *(Virginia: 1827 - 1887)* . . . 82
Three Summer Studies 82
HOWLAND, EDWARD *(South Carolina: 1832 - 1890)* . 86
The Condemned 86
HUBNER, CHARLES W. *(Georgia: 1835 - —)* . . . 88
I'm Growing Old 88

PAGE

Quatrains— 89
The World 89
Duty 89
Fame 90
When We Were Twenty-one 90
JEFFERSON, THOMAS *(Virginia: 1743-1826)* . . . 92
Lovely Peggy 92
KEY, FRANCIS SCOTT *(Maryland: 1780-1843)* . . 94
The Star-Spangled Banner 94
LANIER, SIDNEY *(Georgia: 1842-1881)* 96
A Ballad of Trees and The Master 96
An Evening Song 97
Song of the Chattahoochee 97
Sunrise 99
The Marshes of Glynn 108
LEGARE, JAMES MATTHEWS *(South Carolina: 1823-1859)* 114
To a Lily 114
MCNEILL, JOHN CHARLES *(North Carolina: 1874-1907)* 116
A Christmas Hymn 116
A Few Days Off 117
Dawn 118
The Bride 119
The Rattlesnake 120
The Wife 121
Trifles 122
Valentine 123
Two Pictures 124
MALONE, WALTER *(Mississippi: 1866-—)* . . . 126
October in Tennessee 126
Opportunity 127

PAGE

MILES, GEORGE HENRY *(Maryland: 1824-1871)* . . 129
Said the Rose 129
MORRIS, IDA GOLDSMITH *(Kentucky: 18——)* . . 133
Adrift 133
Childless 133
That Little Chap of Mine 135
Israel 136
Remembrance 137
O'HARA, THEODORE *(Kentucky: 1820-1867)* . . . 138
The Bivouac of the Dead 138
PAGE, H. F. *(North Carolina: 1873——)* 142
The Last Night at Appomattox 142
PALMER, JOHN WILLIAMSON *(Maryland: 1825-1896)* 143
Stonewall Jackson's Way 143
PECK, SAMUEL MINTURN *(Alabama: 1854——)* . . 146
Bessie Brown, M. D 146
Dollie 148
Lillian's Fan 149
The Grapevine Swing 151
PIATT, SARAH MORGAN BRYAN *(Kentucky: 18——)* 154
The Witch in the Glass 154
PINKNEY, EDWARD COATE *(Maryland: 1802-1828)* 155
A Health 155
The Serenade 157
POE, EDGAR ALLAN *(Virginia: 1809-1849)* . . . 158
A Dream Within a Dream 158
Annabel Lee 159
Bridal Ballad 161
For Annie 162
Israfel 166
Lenore 168
The Bells 170

PAGE

The City in the Sea 175
The Conqueror Worm 177
The Haunted Palace 178
The Raven 180
The Sleeper 188
The Valley of Unrest 191
To Helen 192
To One in Paradise 192
Ulalume 193
PRENTICE, GEORGE DENISON *(Kentucky: 1802 - 1870)* 198
The Closing Year 198
PRESTON, MARGARET JUNKIN *(Virginia: 1820 - 1897)* 202
Flood-Tide 202
The Angel Unaware 202
We Two 204
RANDALL, JAMES RYDER *(Maryland: 1839 - 1908)* . 205
My Maryland 205
RUSSELL, IRWIN *(Mississippi: 1853 - 1879)* . . . 209
The Origin of the Banjo 209
RYAN, ABRAM JOSEPH *(Virginia: 1839 - 1886)* . . 212
The Conquered Banner 212
The Sword of Robert Lee 214
SASS, GEORGE HERBERT *(South Carolina: 1845 - 1908)* 216
In a King-Cambyses Vein 216
SPALDING, JOHN LANCASTER *(Kentucky: 1840 - —)* . 219
At the Ninth Hour 219
Death's Grand Avenue 220
The Praise of Men 220
The Spirit of Morning 221
The Starry Host 222
STANTON, FRANK LEBBY *(South Carolina: 1857 - —)* 223
Little Elaine 223

PAGE
STOCKARD, HENRY JEROME *(North Carolina: 1858-—)* 224
Shakespeare 224
As Some Mysterious Wanderer of the Skies . . 224
TABB, JOHN BANISTER *(Virginia: 1845-1909)* . . 226
A Cradle-Song 226
Fern Song 227
Keats 227
Magdalen 228
O'erspent 229
On the Forthcoming Volume of Sidney Lanier's Poems 229
Solitude 229
The Bubble 230
The Druid 230
The Plaint of the Rose 231
THOMPSON, WILL HENRY *(Georgia: 1848-—)* . . 232
The High Tide at Gettysburg 232
TICKNOR, FRANCIS ORRAY *(Georgia: 1822-1874)* . 236
Little Giffen 236
The Sword in the Sea 237
TIMROD, HENRY *(South Carolina: 1829-1867)* . . 239
At Magnolia Cemetery 239
Hymn [Sung at the consecration of Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, S. C.] 240
Sonnets 241
TROUBETZKOY, AMELIE RIVES *(Virginia: 1863-—)* . 244
A Mood 244
Before the Rain 245
A Sonnet 247
TUCKER, BEVERLEY DANDRIDGE *(Virginia: 1846-—)* 248
The Rhone and the Arve 248

PAGE

WALLIS, SEVERN TEACKLE *(Maryland: 1816-1894)* 257
Dejection 257
The Curfew 259
WEEDEN, HOWARD *(Alabama: 18——)* 260
Mammy's Lullaby 260
The Old Boatman 260
Two Lovers and Lizette 261
WELBY, AMELIA COPPUCK *(Maryland: 1819-1852)* . 263
Twilight at Sea 263
WYETH, JOHN ALLAN *(Alabama: 1845-—)* . . . 264
My Sweetheart's Face 264
To My Mother 265
YOUNG, MARTHA *(Alabama: 18——)* 266
God's Li'l' Jewelry 266
INDEX OF TITLES 271
INDEX OF FIRST LINES 274

JOHN HENRY BONER

(North Carolina: 1845-1903)

GATHER LEAVES AND GRASSES

GATHER leaves and grasses,
  Love, to-day,
For the autumn passes
  Soon away.
Chilly winds are blowing.
It will soon be snowing.

Fill the vacant places
  With them, dear,
And the empty vases.
  Brown and sere
Sprays and leaves yet hold
Glints of summer's gold.

In the drear December
  When it snows,
And the dying ember
  Faintly glows,
Leaf and spray may bring
Thoughts of rosy spring.

Ah, we fondly cherish
  Faded things
That had better perish.
  Memory clings
To each leaf it saves.
Chilly winds are blowing,
It will soon be snowing
  On our graves.

REMEMBRANCE

I THINK that we retain of our dead friends
And absent ones no general portraiture;
That perfect memory does not long endure,
But fades and fades until our own life ends.
Unconsciously, forgetfulness attends
That grief for which there is no other cure,
But leaves of each lost one some record sure,—
A look, an act, a tone,— something that lends
Relief and consolation, not regret.
Even that poor mother mourning her dead child,
Whose agonizing eyes with tears are wet,
Whose bleeding heart can not be reconciled
Unto the grave's embrace,— even she shall yet
Remember only when her babe first smiled.

THE MOON-LOVED LAND

No lovelier song was ever heard
Than the notes of the Southern Mocking-Bird
When leaf and blossom are wet with dew
And the wind breathes low the long night through.
O music for grief! It comes like a song
From a voice in the stars; and all night long
The notes flow. But you must live in the South,
Where the clear moon kisses with large cool mouth
The land she loves, in the secret of night,
To hear such music,— the soul-delight
Of the Moon-Loved Land.

When gentle twilight softly closes
The door of day, and the sun-fed roses
Lavishly sweeten the air, you will hear
That wonderful song — now low — now clear —
Till the silvery moon flushed red goes down
On silent country and sleeping town.
O the lovers are fond in the groves of the South
When the large moon kisses with grand sweet mouth
The land she loves; and love has romance
And is more than vow and wedding and dance
In the Moon-Loved Land.

THE SWEET LITTLE FOOL

(The Lament)

I was a fool!
When he looked at me I hung my head
And caught at a blossoming weed.
When he spoke I felt my face turn red
As if it would bleed,
And when I dared look up again
He had turned the bend in the lane.

I was a fool—
For I waited there by the field of clover
Trying my love with a daisy,
And softly saying over and over
"Surely he must be crazy—
Not to see that I love him!" Why
Did I let him pass! O, because I—
I was a fool—that's why!
Blow sweet wind, he will come again—
And I will be walking in the lane.

I was a fool!
O shame, shame—I burn with shame!
Why was I so silly?
Again I waited, and he came
Riding his cream-white filly

And whistling, and when he tipt his hat
I laughed and said "Oh, how glossy and fat
  Is your pretty filly!"
He only blushed. No wonder — for me,
That a country girl so forward should be.

(The Sequel)

Last night when the moon hung low
  Across the field of clover,
She whispered, "I love you so
  It is sweet to say it over
And over again, close to your face,—
But I have neither beauty nor grace.
I can't believe that you love me! I—
But if you do, now, tell me why!"

He answers, as he gently draws
Her lips to his . . . "I love you because
You're a sweet little fool."

CHARLES BRADENBAUGH

(Maryland: 18— - ——)

THE CAVALIER'S SERENADE

[From the papers of the late Charles Bradenbaugh, and published in *The Southern Literary Messenger,* April, 1864.]

Yon silent star his flashing shield
  Hangs on the welkin steep,
While he and I alone afield
  Watch o'er my darling's sleep.

Of the South wind dreams the lily-bell,
  And the woodbine of the bee —
O faithful star, look in and tell,
  Does my rose-bud dream of me?

Beneath that bosom's sweet unrest,
  What dainty fancies bide,—
As folded in a flowret's breast
  The prisoned odors hide.

Yet at my voice these phantoms pass
  And melt in tender fear,
Like fairies on the moon-lit grass
  A distant step who hear.

O fettered bird! O startled fawn!
Thee wait I to behold,
As happy clouds await the dawn
That turns their locks to gold.

Awake, blithe nature's playmate fair!—
All darkness she beguiles,
Who scatters on the longing air
The largess of such smiles!

Almost I feel as if it might
Thy timid beauty wrong
To weave—O chaplet of delight!—
Thy graces into song.

The chant of brooks in forest dark,
The night song of the sea,
The airy lyric of the lark,
Thy minstrelsy should be!

PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE

(Virginia: 1856 - ——)

EDGAR ALLAN POE

TIME weighs the destinies that men befall,
Bestows new laurels, turns the green to sere.
Too oft no honors soothe the poet here:
But when his Shade has passed into the Hall
Of Death we hear Fame's trumpet sound through all
The avenues of this terrestrial sphere,—
A blare that stirs no more the withered ear,
But makes men pause to list the lofty call
To pay full homage to a slighted name,
And genius long o'erlooked with fire acclaim.
Thus, melancholy, taciturn, forlorn,
Poe went his way through thorns and rocks and sand:
Lo! Fortune gave him then her empty hand,
But for him dead she pours her amplest horn.

MADISON JULIUS CAWEIN

(Kentucky: 1865 - ——)

ATTRIBUTES

I saw the daughters of the Dawn come dancing o'er the hills:
The wind of Morn danced with them, oh, and all the elves of air:
I saw their ribboned roses blow, their gowns of daffodils,
As over eyes of sapphire tossed the wild gold of their hair.

I saw the summer of their feet imprint the earth with dew,
And all the wildflowers open eyes in joy and wonderment:
I saw the sunlight of their hands waved at each bird that flew,
And all the birds, as with one voice, to their wild love gave vent.

"And, oh!" I said, "how fair you are! how fair! how very fair!—
Oh, leap, my heart! and laugh, my heart! as laughs and leaps the Dawn!—

Mount with the lark and sing with him and cast away
your care!
For love and life are come again and night and sor-
row gone!"

I saw the acolytes of Eve, the mystic sons of Night,
Come pacing through the ancient wood in hoods of
hodden-gray
Their somber cloaks were pinned with stars, and each
one bore a light,
A moony lanthorn, and a staff to help him on his way.

BEAUTIFUL-BOSOMED, O NIGHT

I

Beautiful-Bosomed, O Night, in thy noon
Move with majesty onward! soaring, as lightly
As a singer may soar the notes of an exquisite tune,
The stars and the moon
Through the clerestories high of the heaven, the firma-
ment's halls:
Under whose sapphirine walls,
June, hesperian June,
Robed in divinity wanders. Daily and nightly
The turquoise touch of her robe, that the violets star,
The silvery fall of her feet, that lilies are,

Fill the land with languorous light and perfume.—
Is it the melody mute of burgeoning leaf and of bloom?
The music of Nature, that silently shapes in the gloom
Immaterial hosts
Of spirits that have the flowers and leaves in their keep,
Whom I hear, whom I hear?
With their sighs of silver and pearl?
Invisible ghosts,—
Each sigh a shadowy girl,—
Who whisper in leaves and glimmer in blossoms and hover
In color and fragrance and loveliness, breathed from the deep
World-soul of the mother,
Nature; who over and over,—
Both sweetheart and lover,—
Goes singing her songs from one sweet month to the other.

II

Lo! 'tis her songs that appear, appear,
In forest and field, on hill-land and lea,
As visible harmony,
Materialized melody,
Crystallized beauty, that out of the atmosphere
Utters itself, in wonder and mystery,
Peopling with glimmering essence the hyaline far and the near. . . .

III

Behold how it sprouts from the grass and blossoms from flower and tree!
In waves of diaphanous moonlight and mist,
In fugue upon fugue of gold and of amethyst,
Around me, above me it spirals; now slower, now faster,
Like symphonies born of the thought of a musical master.—
O music of Earth! O God, who the music inspired!
Let me breathe of the life of thy breath!
And so be fulfilled and attired
In resurrection, triumphant o'er time and o'er death!

HYMN TO SPIRITUAL DESIRE

I

Mother of visions, with lineaments dulcet as numbers
Breathed on the eyelids of Love by music that slumbers,
Secretly, sweetly, O presence of fire and snow,
Thou comest mysterious,
In beauty imperious,
Clad on with dreams and the light of no world that we know:
Deep to my innermost soul am I shaken,
Helplessly shaken and tossed,
And of thy tyrannous yearnings so utterly taken,
My lips, unsatisfied, thirst;
Mine eyes are accurst

With longings for visions that far in the night are forsaken;
And mine ears, in listening lost,
Yearn, waiting the note of a chord that will never awaken.

II

Like palpable music thou comest, like moonlight; and far,—
Resonant bar upon bar,—
The vibrating lyre
Of the spirit responds with melodious fire,
As thy fluttering fingers now grasp it and ardently shake,
With laughter and ache,
The chords of existence, the instrument star-sprung,
Whose frame is of clay, so wonderfully molded of mire.

III

Vested with vanquishment, come, O Desire, Desire!
Breathe in this harp of my soul the audible angel of Love!
Make of my heart an Israfel burning above,
A lute for the music of God, that lips, which are mortal, but stammer!
Smite every rapturous wire
With golden delirium, rebellion and silvery clamor,
Crying—"Awake! awake!"
Too long hast thou slumbered! too far from the regions of glamour

With its mountains of magic, its fountains of faery, the spar-sprung,
Hast thou wandered away, O Heart!
Come, oh, come and partake
Of necromance banquets of Beauty; and slake
Thy thirst in the waters of Art,
That are drawn from the streams
Of love and of dreams.

IV

"Come, oh, come!
No longer shall language be dumb!
Thy vision shall grasp —
As one doth the glittering hasp
Of a sword made splendid with gems and with gold —
The wonder and richness of life, not anguish and hate of it merely.
And out of the stark
Eternity, awful and dark,
Immensity silent and cold,—
Universe-shaking as trumpets, or cymbaling metals,
Imperious; yet pensive and pearly
And soft as the rosy unfolding of petals,
Or crumbling aroma of blossoms that wither too early,—
The majestic music of God, where He plays
On the organ, eternal and vast, of eons and days."

INGRAM CROCKETT

(Kentucky: 1856 - ——)

ORION

The splendor of Silence,— of snow-jeweled hills and of ice,
And the shield of Auriza aflame with its starry device,
And Sirius fair with a beauty and youth as of one
Untiring and eager, and swift for the race to be run.

The mystical reaches of space and the cosmical cries
Of a star that is born, of a star that all desolate dies —
And ever the follow and cry and the echoes that keep,
For the dreamer of dreams, the voices of deep unto deep.

At the call of the Hunter, bright-belted and King of them all,
Who scatters the æons, as dewdrops, unheeding their fall,
The soul of the watcher upsprings to follow, follow the chase
To the striving and death of far worlds in the fiery race.

To the fields of an infinite whirling of flakes of new fire,
That scatter and ceaselessly come with a quenchless desire
To be shaped, to be on where the mightier ones are away —
Far flaming through deathless night in the glory of deathless day.

Till he come to the purpose of all, till the Hunter is dead,
And his ashes are lost, and another cries hollo! instead,—
Till he come to the Place of the Purpose, and, dauntlessly free,
He taketh his quarry of Light, of Truth, and of Beauty to Be.

THE GOSSIPS

In Death's dark wood two cedars stood;
Each nodded o'er a grave,
The wind blew shrill, the snow fell chill
Before the wintry wave.

"When I was young," said one, whose tongue
Was like a sobbing sigh,
"The way was new, the dead were few —
This was the first to die.

"And here by her, in April's blur
Of misty green and red,
They planted me — that I might be
Companion to the dead.

"By night, by day, so still she lay;
She was a little thing:
Yet oft I thought she must have caught
My lonely whispering.

"Then one by one, in cloud and sun,
With mourning and with tears,
The small and great in solemn state
Came with the passing years.

"The wood grew trim, and passing prim
The formal pathways ran —
And many a shaft was epitaphed
With pride and prayers of man."

The other torn by storms and worn,
Wailed in a laughter wild:
"Ere you," he said, "an older dead
In heaps lay here defiled.

"The tainted dust, a yellow crust,
Was thick on every leaf;
By plague laid waste, they came in haste —
There was no time for grief.

"Oft in the night, or dawn's wan light,
Or in the sickening heat,
They came, they came — the land was flame,
The living scarce did eat.

"To priest or creed they paid small heed;
The quickly hollowed ground —
The trampled sod, the falling clod,
The raw unsightly mound.

"At twilight dim they came with him
Whose dust beneath me lies,
Hid none too soon — a ghastly moon
Was in the sullen skies.

"That midnight drear a form drew near,
A stricken, slender shape,
With moaning sound and clasped the mound —
The sunken graves did gape.

"And once again, unseen of men,
She came and weeping made
A place for me in memory
Of him who had betrayed.

"And then one day when earth was gay,
And flowers bestrewed this spot,—
They brought her in, a thing of sin,
Her grave is long forgot."

THE WIND

THE way of the wind is a strange, wild way,
As over the clover he goes;
Listen, and you shall hear him play
Quaint ditties he only knows,—
Melodies waking the clover to sway
And dimpling the pink wild-rose.

For the wind is mad with the old, old spell
That was cast in the morn of Time;
That poets have ever been fain to tell
In the ripple and flow of rhyme.
List, to the long sweet lisping swell,
And the sudden silvery chime.

And the wind has listened to Merlin there,
In his mystic place by the sea,
And the wild-rose, blushing, would better take care,
For the wind is a lover free—
And when he sings softly beware, beware
The song and the witchery.

WORSHIP

NOT where men congregate to talk of God,
And thunder forth their dogmas in His name,
But here, my heart, where silken bluebells nod
And rosy redbuds flame.

Here where the wind, His spirit, prayeth low,
And Spring each word of ministry fulfills
In bud and bloom, with green-and-golden glow
Crowning the prophet hills.

Where root, and twig, and bough obey His will,
And every leaf has its appointed place,—
And all the trees are waiting, reverent, still;
His never-failing grace.

DANSKE DANDRIDGE

(Virginia: 18— - ——)

THE DEAD MOON

We are ghost-ridden:
Through the deep night
Wanders a spirit,
Noiseless and white.
Loiters not, lingers not, knoweth not rest;
Ceaselessly haunting the East and the West.

She, whose undoing the ages have wrought,
Moves on to the time of God's rhythmical thought.
In the dark, swinging sea,
As she speedeth through space,
She reads her pale image;
The wounds are agape on her face.
She sees her grim nakedness
Pierced by the eyes
Of the Spirits of God
In their flight through the skies.
(Her wounds they are many and hollow.)
The Earth turns and wheels as she flies,
And this Specter, this Ancient, must follow.

When, in the æons,
Had she beginning?
What is her story?
What was her sinning?
Do the ranks of the Holy Ones
Know of her crime?
Does it loom in the mists
Of the birthplace of Time?
The stars, do they speak of her
Under their breath,
"Will this Wraith be forever
Thus restless in death?"
On, through immensity,
Sliding and stealing,
On, through infinity,
Nothing revealing.

I see the fond lovers;
They walk in her light;
They charge the "soft maiden"
To bless their love-plight.
Does she laugh in her place,
As she glideth through space?
Does she laugh in her orbit with never a sound?
That to her, a dead body,
With nothing but rents in her round—
Blighted and marred,
Wrinkled and scarred,

Barren and cold,
Wizened and old—
That to her should be told,
That to her should be sung
The yearning and burning of them that are young?

Our Earth that is young,
That is throbbing with life,
Has fiery upheavals,
Has boisterous strife;
But she that is dead has no stir, breathes no air;
She is calm, she is voiceless, in lonely despair.
We dart through the void;
We have cries, we have laughter;
The phantom that haunts us
Comes silently after.
This Ghost-lady follows,
Though none hear her tread;
On, on, we are flying,
Still tracked by our Dead—
By this white, awful Mystery,
Haggard and dead.

THE FAIRY CAMP

WHAT did I see in the woods to-day?
I saw a fairies' gipsy camp.
The tents were toadstools, brown and gray,
Among the bracken, soiled and damp.
I called on a cowslip 'mid the green,
And borrowed a bit of fairy gold,
And then I found the Gipsy Queen,
And so I had my fortune told.

Ah, yes, she told me a secret true,
That wild-eyed gipsy, brown and red;
But I may not tell it out to you,
For that would break the charm, she said.
And if you seek them by yourself
You will not find that strolling band;
They have pilfered the wild bees' hoarded pelf,
And flitted away to another land.

THE LAST NIGHT

AH! how she trembles when the night is long,
And, sitting idle in her old armchair,
She hears the rude wind shout his drunken song,
While thoughts that sleep in light and only dare
To walk, like ghosts, on wildest nights forlorn,
Hold ghostly counsel till the breaking morn.

Thus, like the clangor of alarum-bells
  When on a sleeping town the rabble springs,
A ringing in her pulses sinks and swells,
  And times the song the Bacchant Tempest sings:
Thus beats the hurried tocsin in her brain,
And all her soul is sacked by Fear again.

"Wild night! wild fear! strong love, and stronger sin!
  Ah! recompense too just for me to bear!
The casement shudders back, It flutters in:
  The trembling shadow of my guilt is there;
In from the sleet, the night, the uproar wild;
My shame and my despair — my child, my child!

"O little form that I may never fold!
  Beyond my empty arms my baby stands.
It sobs, it cries, it shivers with the cold:
  Its eyes are his: it wrings its tiny hands.
Ah God, my baby, that may never rest
In dewy slumber on my guilty breast!

"It was not I, thou little ghost, not I:
  I slept as one who would not wake again:
They stole thee in my sleep. I could not die,
  But woke to loss and emptiness and pain.
O heinous crime to save an honored name,
That none might point a finger at my shame.

"Here in my bosom burns a fiery tide
No velvet baby lips will suck away.
O cruel hurt of love! O hellish pride!
O murdered baby, take your eyes away!
Thou weary child no mother-love can warm,
Flit out into the night, the sleet, the storm.

"The wind is wilder. Ah, Christ, let me die!
O Tempest, blow away my feeble breath!
In some hid cavern with my child to lie —
O sudden hope that gives me strength for death!"

She leaves the chair; she wanders far from home:
"I come, my little lonely one, I come!
I reach the river: Oh, 'tis cold; but thou
Art colder still, and I am with thee now!"

TWILIGHT IN THE WOODS

The hour for praise has come again,
Within these arches, tall and dim,
And all the forest is a fane
Where Nature sings her vesper hymn,
With birds and insects and the breeze
To voice her glad solemnities.

Here, at the ending of the day,
The Locust folds her leaves to pray;

The bees that cheered her all along
Fly homeward with an even-song:
The Oak is at his orisons:
The stream with whispered chanting runs:
  The Lady Birch and Alder trees
Do tell their beads like veilèd nuns,
  With hanging vines for rosaries:
The flowers with meek petition rise
And lift to Heaven appealing eyes;
Sweet eyes, all dimmed with holy tears
  To-morrow's sun will kiss away:
Thus the sad spirit, worn with fears,
  When darkness shrouds the glimmering day,
Succumbs to weariness and pain,
To smile when sunlight comes again.
Now stirs the blast, and from each tree
Responds a murmured litany:
Then — silence: till the reverent hush
Is broken by the tranquil thrush,—
Fit preacher for these solitudes,
Benignant hermit of the woods.

"Peace!" speaks the lofty bird. "Be still.
Learn loving, and the Maker's will."
His pulpit is an ancient tree,
Draped with large creepers decently;
From which he cries his parting word:
"O holy, holy, holy Lord!"

Follows with tones of yearning love,
The benediction of the dove:
After,—the service comes to end,
And on my homeward way I wend
As one who walks within the Veil,
Or sees, bright-orbed, the Holy Grail,
And feels, as 't were, an aureole
Of chastened rapture crown his soul.

MARY McNEIL FENOLLOSA

(Alabama: 18—- ——)

A DRIFTING PETAL

If I, athirst by a stream, should kneel
With never a blossom or bud in sight,
Till down on the theme of its liquid night
The moon-white tip of a sudden keel,
A fairy boat,
Should dawn and float
To my hand, as only the Gods deserve,
The cloud-like curve,
The loosened sheaf,
The ineffable pink of a lotus leaf,—
I should know, I should feel, that far away
On the dimpled rim of a brighter day
A thought had blossomed, and shaken free
One sheath of its innermost soul for me.

AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH

Out from its casket of pungent calf,
Out from the strata of yellowing leaves
I startled a picture,— a photograph
Hid like a fern, in the old world's sleeves.

I caught it, and stared with my heart at bay
  Sweet eyes! Sweet lips! And a smile like light!
The face, as a rose, in its dew-dream lay,
  How could she know of the coming night?

Why should I shrink from her unknown fears?
  I am a woman, and proud and cold.
I'm done with shrinking, and done with tears.
  Who weeps on the pictured face I hold?

Why should I rise, with a sudden start,
  Seeking a mirror; with eyes flashed keen
From one to the other? Oh! withered heart!
  And the row of grimacing ghosts between!

MIYOKO SAN

Snare me the soul of a dragon-fly,
The jeweled heart of a dew-tipped spray,
    A star's quick eye,
    Or the scarlet cry
Of a lonely wing on a dawn-lit bay.
    Then add the gleam of a golden fan,
    And I will paint you Miyoko San.

Find me the thought of a rose, at sight
Of her own pale face in a fawning stream,
    The polished night
    Of a crow's slow flight,

And the long, sweet grace of a willow's dream.
Then add the droop of a golden fan,
And I will paint you Miyoko San.

Lure me a lay from a sunbeam's throat,
The chant of bees in a perfumed lair,
Or a single note
Gone mad to float
To its own sweet death in the upper air.
Then add the click of a golden fan,
And I have painted Miyoko San.

SUNRISE IN THE HILLS OF SATSUMA

The day unfolds like a lotus bloom,
Pink at the tip and gold at the core,
Rising up swiftly through waters of gloom
That lave night's shore.

Down bamboo-stalks the sunbeams slide,
Darting like glittering elves at play,
To the thin arched grass where crickets hide
And sing all day.

The old crows caw from the camphor boughs,
They have builded there for a thousand years;
Their nestlings stir in a huddled drowse
To pipe shrill fears.

A white fox creeps to his home in the hill,
A small gray ape peers up at the sun;
Crickets and sunbeams are quarreling still;
Day has begun.

JULIA NEELY FINCH

(Alabama: 18— - ——)

THE UNBORN

Thou art my very own,
A part of me,
Bone of my bone
And flesh of my flesh.
And thou shalt be
Heart of my heart
And brain of brain —
In years that are to come to me and thee.

Before thou wast a being, made
Of spirit, as of flesh,
Thou didst sleep beneath the beats
Of my tumultuous heart, and drink,
With little aimless lips
And blind, unseeing eyes,
From every bursting vein
Replete with life's abundant flood.
Ay! even of my very breath,
And from my blood
Thou didst imbibe the fresh

And glorious air, that holds the sweets
Of nature's sure and slow eclipse;
That ceaseless round of life and death
Which are the close entwinëd braid
Of all the seasons' subtle mesh
And endless chain.

In a soft and silken chamber set apart—
Here, just beneath my happy heart,—
Thou didst lie at dreamy ease
While all my being paid
Its tribute unto thee.
What happy hours for thee and me!
As when a bird
Broods on its downy nest—
So would I sit
And watch the flit
Of idle shadows to and fro,
And brood upon my treasure hid
Within my willing flesh.
And when there stirred
A little limb,—a tiny hand!—
What rapturous thrills of ecstasy
Shook all my being to its inmost citadel!
Ah! none but she who has borne
A child beneath her breast may know
What wondrous thrill and subtle spell
Comes from this wondrous woven band

That binds a mother to her unborn child
Within her womb.
As in the earth —
That fragrant tomb
Of all that lives, or man or beast —
Soft blossoms bud and bloom and swell,
So didst thou from my body gain
Sweet sustenance and royal feast.

Then through the gates of priceless pain
Thou camest to me — fair, so fair,
And so complete
From rose-tipped feet
To silken hair!
And there beneath each pearly lid,
There glowed a jewel — passing rare!
It moves and breathes! It slakes its thirst
At my all-abundant breast!
Oh, moment born of life — of love!
Oh, rapture of all earth's high, high above!
Three lives in one —
By loving won!
My own — and thine —
Oh, bond divine!
Our little child! Our little child!

ARMISTEAD CHURCHILL GORDON

(Virginia: 1855 - ——)

"AH, SI JEUNESSE SAVAIT!"

Had Youth but known some years ago,
That freckled-faced small girls would grow,
In most astounding way,
To lovely women in whose eyes
The light a man most longs for lies —
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

Had Youth but known — my youth, I mean,
That you would walk as regnant queen
Of hearts in this new day —
That elfin locks could change to curls
Softer than any other girl's —
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

Had youth but known the time would come
When I should stand, abashed and dumb,
With not one word to say,
Before you, whom in days gone by
I'd tease until you could but cry —
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

I little dreamed in those old days
Of undeveloped, winning ways
To wile men's hearts away —
When wading in the brook with you
I splashed your best frock through and through.
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

Your pretty nose — ah, there's the rub,—
I used to laugh at once as "snub"
Is now *nez retrousse;*
Upon the one-time brown, bare feet
You wear French kids now, trim and neat,—
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

The brief kilt-skirt, the legs all bare,
The freckled face, the tangled hair,
These things are passed away:
You are a woman now full grown,
With lovers of your very own —
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

You'd plead to be my comrade then,
With tearful big, brown eyes.— Ah, when,
My winning, winsome May,
Will words like those your lips a-tween,
Come back again? No more, I ween!
Ah, si jeunesse savait!

Time turns the tables. It is meet,
Doubtless, that I here at your feet
  Should feel your scepter's sway —
Should know you hold me 'neath your heel,—
Should love you — and should — well, should feel:
  Ah, si jeunesse savait!

ENISE

VERY fair you are, Enise,
  For you hold
  In your eyes
All the blue of summer skies,
In your tresses all the shimmer
  Of red gold.

And your cheeks are pink, Enise,
  As a rose;
  And your mouth
A sweet blossom of the South;
And tip-tilted like its petal
  Is your nose!

And that form of yours, Enise,
  Lacks no grace
  Lilies wear;
And your bosom's swelling heave
Tells of sprites imprisoned there,
  I believe,

That would fain be free, Enise,
For awhile.—
Yet your charms,—
Eyes and hair and throat and arms,—
None of these, Enise, bewitch me
Like your smile.

Did you ever know, Enise,
Of that creed
Which the old
Rabbins of the Talmud hold
Of all spirits? Should I tell you,
Would you heed?

You have lived alway, Enise,—
Thus they say,—
At the birth
Of your body on the earth,
Passed your ever-living soul
Into this clay.

And your guardian angel came,
Spread white wings
O'er you there,—
Touched his finger to your lips
With a prayer,—
And you knew no longer ante-natal things.

As the Rabbins, I, Enise,
Hold it too:—
When those wings
For a moment are uplifted
Memory brings
Visions of a happier life
Back to you.

Do you marvel thoughts like these
Should beguile
Minds like mine?
I can nothing else divine
That could lend such holy sweetness
To your smile.

FOUR FEET ON A FENDER

It is anthracite coal, and the fender is low,
Steel-barred is the grate, and the tiles
Hand-painted in figures; the one at the top
Is a Japanese lady, who smiles.
There's an *or-molu* clock on the mantel; above,
A masterpiece: *fecit Gerome;*
On the fender four feet — my young wife's feet and mine,
Trimly shod, in a row and — at home.

My slippers are broidered of velvet and silk,
The work of her fingers before
We stood at the altar. To have them made up
Cost me just a round five dollars more
Than a new pair had cost at my bootmaker's shop;
But each stitch was a token of love—
And she never shall know. Ah, how easy they are
On their perch the steel fender above.

Words fail me to tell of her own. There's a chest
In her father's old garret; and there
'Mid a thousand strange things of a century past
She discovered this ravishing pair.
They are small, trim and natty; their color is red;
And they each have the funniest heel.
White balbriggan stockings, high-clocked, underneath
These *decollete* slippers reveal.

Ah, many a time in my grandfather's day
They led the old fellow a dance.
They were bought with Virginia tobacco, and came,
Who would guess it?—imported from France.
How odd that yon stern-faced ancestor of mine
In the earlier days of his life
Should have loved her who tripped in these red slippers
then,—
The young grandmamma of my wife!

The course of some true loves, at least, runs not smooth,—
And I'm glad that it's so, when I see
The trim, dainty feet in the red slippers there
Which belong to my lady — and me!
Two short months ago in this snug little room
I sat in this soft-cushioned seat;
No companion was near save my pipe. Now, behold
On the polished steel fender four feet!

Let them prate of the happiness Paradise yields
To the Moslem,— the raptures that thrill
The soul of the Hindu whom Juggernaut takes,—
The bliss of Gan-Eden; — and still
I'll believe that no gladness which man has conceived
Can compare with the tranquillized state
That springs from two small feet alongside one's own,
On the fender in front of his grate.

L'Envoi

In vain the illusion. The trim feet are gone.
They trip by my door every day; —
Yet they stop not nor tarry; but swiftly pass on,
Nor can I persuade them to stay.
And a bachelor's dreams are but dreams at the best,
Be they never so fond or so sweet.
The anthracite blaze has burned low; and behold
On the fender *two* lonesome old feet!

JAMES LINDSAY GORDON

(Virginia: 1860-1904)

LORRAINE

Bonny Lorraine, have you forgot
  The time we walked o'er the morning lea?
I still keep the blue forget-me-not
  That you took from your hair and gave to me.
Would you like to walk those ways again
  With me at your side in the morning time?
  Do you ever think of your youth's sweet prime,
And your young boy-lover, Bonny Lorraine?

Ah, well I remember the time we stood
  By the glancing river when day was done,
And the whispering trees in the dim old wood
  Turned crimson and gold in the setting sun:
When your heart and your lips and your arms were fain
  To cling to me there as your life's one love
  While the stars came out the skies above,—
Do you remember it, Bonny Lorraine?

Surely your heart could not forget
The night when I bade you a last farewell;
Your long, dark lashes with tears were wet,
And your anguish more than your lips could tell;
How you kissed me there as I stood in the rain,
And held me fast while you bade me go,—
With your desolate, golden head bowed low,
I know you remember, Bonny Lorraine.

Across the street where the music swells
You glide through the throng in the shadowy dance.
In your ears the sound of your marriage bells
In your heart the dream of the old romance;
I see you glimmer across the pane—
The jewels ablaze in your shining hair,—
And the form of another beside you there,
But I do not envy him now, Lorraine.

Let him bow down low at your royal feet,—
Let him sing love's song if it brings him joy;
I sang it once and I found it sweet
In the days when you charmed me—a foolish boy;
But I never shall waken the old refrain,
Its beautiful music is almost hushed:
My heart was bruised but it was not crushed,
And it loves you no longer, Bonny Lorraine.

Dance on while the music throbs and beats:
  Drink memory to death in your wedding wine;
He knows not your life whose quick glance meets
  The false, sweet light in your eyes divine.
I can look on you now with no more pain,—
  On your fair proud face, in your splendid eyes,—
  Then looking up to yon starlit skies
Thank God that I lost you, Bonny Lorraine.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

(South Carolina: 1830-1886)

A COMPARISON

I THINK, ofttimes, that lives of men may be
Likened to wandering winds that come and go,
Not knowing whence they rise, whither they blow
O'er the vast globe, voiceful of grief or glee.
Some lives are buoyant zephyrs sporting free
In tropic sunshine; some, long winds of woe
That shun the day, wailing with murmurs low,
Through haunted twilights, by the unresting sea;
Others are ruthless, stormful, drunk with might,
Born with deep passion or malign desire:
They rave 'mid thunder-peals and clouds of fire.
Wild, reckless all, save that some power unknown
Guides each blind force till life be overblown,
Lost in vague hollows of the fathomless night.

A LITTLE WHILE I FAIN WOULD LINGER YET

A LITTLE while (my life is almost set!)
I fain would pause along the downward way,
Musing an hour in this sad sunset-ray,
While, Sweet! our eyes with tender tears are wet:
A little hour I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger yet,
All for love's sake, for love that cannot tire;
Though fervid youth be dead, with youth's desire,
And hope has faded to a vague regret,
A little while I fain would linger yet.

A little while I fain would linger here:
Behold! who knows what strange, mysterious bars
'Twixt souls that love may rise in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

A little while I yearn to hold thee fast,
Hand locked in hand, and loyal heart to heart;
(O pitying Christ! those woeful words, "We part!")
So ere the darkness fall, the light be past,
A little while I fain would hold thee fast.

A little while, when light and twilight meet,—
Behind, our broken years; before, the deep
Weird wonder of the last unfathomed sleep,—
A little while I still would clasp thee, Sweet,
A little while, when night and twilight meet.

A little while I fain would linger here;
Behold! who knows what soul-dividing bars
Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars?
Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:
A little while I still would linger here.

BY THE GRAVE OF HENRY TIMROD

When last we parted — thy frail hand in mine —
Above us smiled September's passionless sky,
And touched by fragrant airs, the hill-side pine
Thrilled in the mellow sunshine tenderly;
So rich the robe on nature's slow decay,
We scarce could deem the Winter tide was near,
Or lurking death, masked in imperial grace;
Alas! that Autumn day
Drew not more close to Winter's empire drear
Than thou, my heart! to meet grief face to face!

I clasped thy tremulous hand, nor marked how weak
Its answering grasp; and if thine eyes did swim
In unshed tears, and on thy fading cheek
Rested a nameless shadow, gaunt and dim,—
My soul was blind; fear had not touched her sight
To awful vision; so, I bade thee go,
Careless, and tranquil as that treacherous morn;
Nor dreamed how soon the blight
Of long-implanted seeds of care would throw
Their nightshade flowers above the springing corn.

Since then, full many a year hath risen and set,
With Spring-tide showers, and Autumn pomps unfurled
O'er gorgeous woods, and mountain walls of jet —
While love and loss, alternate, ruled the world;
Till now once more we meet — my friend and I —

Once more, once more — and thus, alas! we meet —
Above, a rayless heaven; beneath, a grave;
Oh, Christ! and dost thou lie
Neglected here, in thy worn burial-sheet?
Friend! were there none to shield thee, none to save?

Ask of the Winter winds — scarce colder they
Than that strange land — thy birthplace and thy tomb:
Ask of the somber cloud-wracks trooping gray,
And grim as hooded ghosts at stroke of doom;
At least, the winds, though chill, with gentler sweep
Seem circling round and o'er thy place of rest,
While the sad clouds, as clothed in tenderer guise,
Do lowly bend, and weep
O'er the dead Poet, in whose living breast
Dumb nature found a voice, how sweet and wise!

Once more we meet, once more — my friend and I —
But ah! his hand is dust, his eyes are dark;
Thy merciless weight, thou dread mortality,
From out his heart hath crushed the latest spark
Of that warm life, benignly bright and strong;
Yet no; we have *not* met — my friend and I —
Ashes to ashes in this earthly prison!
Are these, O child of song,
Thy glorious self, heir of the stars and sky?
Thou art not here, not *here,* for thou hast risen!

Death gave thee wings, and lo! thou hast soared above
All human utterance and all finite thought;
Pain may not hound thee through that realm of love,
Nor grief, wherewith thy mortal days were fraught,
Load thee again — nor vulture want, that fed
Even on thy heart's blood, wound thee; idle, then,
Our bitter sorrowing; what though bleak and wild
Rests thine uncrownèd head?
Known art thou now to angels and to men —
Heaven's saint, and earth's brave singer undefiled.

Even as I spake in broken under-breath
The winds drooped lifeless; faintly struggling through
The heaven-bound pall, which seemed a pall of death,
One cordial sunbeam cleft the opening blue;
Swiftly it glanced, and settling, softly shone
O'er the grave's head; in that same instant came
From the near copse a bird-song half divine;
"Heart," said I, "Hush thy moan,
List the bird's singing, mark the heaven-born flame,
God-given are these — an omen and a sign!"

In the bird's song an omen *his* must live!
In the warm glittering of that golden beam,
A sign his soul's majestic hopes survive,
Raised to fruition o'er life's weary dream.
So now I leave him, low, yet restful here;

So now I leave him, high-exalted, far
  Beyond all memory of earth's guilt or guile;
    Hark! 'tis his voice of cheer,
Dropping, methinks, from some mysterious star;
  His face I see, and on his face — a smile!

SONNET

As one who strays from out some shadowy glade,
Fronting a lurid noontide, stern, yet bright,
O'er mart and tower, and castellated height,
Shrinks slowly backward, dazed and half afraid —
So I, whose household gods their stand have made
Far from the populous city's life and light,
Its roar of traffic and its stormy might,
Shrink as I pass beyond my woodland shade.

The wordy conflict, the tempestuous din
Of these vast capitals, on ear and brain
Beat with the loud, reiterated swell
Of one fierce strain of passion and of sin,
Strange as in nightmare dreams the mad refrain
Of some wild chorus of the vaults of Hell.

MY STUDY

THIS is my world! within these narrow walls,
I own a princely service. The hot care
And tumult of our frenzied life are here
But as a ghost and echo; what befalls
In the far mart to me is less than naught;
I walk the fields of quiet Arcadies,
And wander by the brink of hoary seas,
Calmed to the tendance of untroubled thought;
Or if a livelier humor should enhance
The slow-time pulse, 'tis not for present strife,
The sordid zeal with which our age is rife,
Its mammon conflicts crowned by fraud or chance,
But gleamings of the lost, heroic life,
Flashed through the gorgeous vistas of romance.

THE MOCKING-BIRD

At Night

A GOLDEN pallor of voluptuous light
Filled the warm southern night:
The moon, clear orbed, above the sylvan scene
Moved like a stately queen,
So rife with conscious beauty all the while
What could she do but smile
At her own perfect loveliness below,
Glassed in the tranquil flow

Of crystal fountains and unruffled streams?
Half lost in waking dreams,
As down the loneliest forest dell I strayed,
Lo! from a neighboring glade,
Flashed through the drifts of moonshine, swiftly came
A fairy shape of flame.

It rose in dazzling spirals overhead,
Whence to wild sweetness wed,
Poured marvelous melodies, silvery trill on trill;
The very leaves grew still
On the charmed trees to hearken; while for me,
Heart-thrilled to ecstasy,
I followed — followed the bright shape that flew,
Still circling up the blue,
Till as a fountain that has reached its height,
Falls back in sprays of light
Slowly dissolved, so that enrapturing lay,
Divinely melts away
Through tremulous spaces to a music-mist,
Soon by the fitful breeze
    How gently kissed
Into remote and tender silences.

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE

(South Carolina: 1856 - ——)

AT ANCHOR

From "Sylvan Lyrics"

My love was like a buoyant boat,
O'er sunny waves at sea;
And, in the voyage of my heart,
She sailed away from me.

I followed in her flying wake;
The waves grew strong and fleet;
I passed by shoals of circumstance,
And quicksands of defeat.

But little winds of coquetry
Still kept our lives apart,
'Till, in my cruise of love, I reached
The harbor of her heart.

A CYCLONE AT SEA

A THROAT of thunder, a tameless heart,
And a passion malign and free;
He is no shëik of the desert sand,
But an Arab of the sea.

He sprang from the womb of some wild cloud,
And was born to smite and slay;
To soar like a million hawks set free,
And swoop on his ocean prey.

He has scourged the Sea, 'till her mighty breast
Responds to his heart's fierce beat;
And has torn brave souls from their bodies frail
To fling them at Allah's feet.

Possessed by a demon's lust of life,
He revels o'er wrecks and graves;
And hurtles onward in curbless speed,—
Dark Bedouin of the waves.

AN AUTUMN BREEZE

This gentle and half melancholy breeze
Is but a wandering Hamlet of the trees,
Who finds a tongue in every lingering leaf
To voice some subtlety of sylvan grief.

EXILES

Hopes grimly banished from the heart
Are the sad exiles that depart
To melancholy's rayless goal,—
A bleak Siberia of the soul.

ON A BUST OF MENDELSSOHN

His high-arched brow and quiet eyelids seem
Brushed by the wings of some celestial dream,—
A bird of passage whose melodious breath
Dispersed in music the wan mist of Death.

POEM

For the unveiling of the bust of Sidney Lanier, at Macon, Ga., Oct. 17, 1890.

Unveil the noble brow, the deep-souled eyes,
Wherein melodious unities
Of music and of poetry were born,
For, undeterred by care's half sluggish thorn —
Barbed oft with suffering — he bravely brought
To song's full bloom his lyric buds of thought.

Here Love and Homage shall alike proclaim
The undying whiteness of our poet's fame,
Wed to the marble, yet exempt from cold,
As winter's clouds blest by the sun's warm gold.

And now I hear,
Far off yet clear,
Two voices that are one;
For, drawing close to music's feet,
'Tis thus her lyric sister sweet
Sings of their cherished son:

Strong-winged and free, each word of me
Thrilled through his heart and brain;
His soul was lit by lights that flit
Across the waving grain!

The marshes drear he made a prayer,
With words whose wondrous flight
Bore thoughts that reach, through rhythmic speech,
To sun-lands of sight!

He let no seed from Doubt's dark weed
Fall in the holy shrine
Where Song was bred, by Music led
To beckoning heights divine;

And seldom mute, his silver flute
Invoked with matchless art,
Each wave of sound by Silence bound
Within her vestal heart.

Death's arctic fear—"a cordial rare"
To his enraptured dream—
Came from the blue his spirit knew,
Of Love and Faith supreme.

His "Sunrise Song," with rapture strong,
Rose like a lark in light,
Who feels the sway of sovereign Day
Reign o'er the mists of Night!

He loved the flow of winds that blow
To "odor-currents" set,—

The gem-like hue of fleeting dew,
  Frail rose and violet,—

The soul in trees whose litanies
  His reverent spirit heard;
The corn-blades rife with vernal life,
  The rune of bee or bird!

Strong-winged and free, each word of me
  Thrilled through his heart and brain,
His soul was lit by lights that flit
  Across the waving grain.

The marshes drear he made a prayer
  With words, whose wondrous flight
Bore thoughts, that reach, through rhythmic speech
  To sun-lands out of sight!

SCANDAL

Far blacker than a raven's wings,
It croaks and feeds on unclean things,
Nor lets the shadow of a doubt
Soften the lie it burrows out.

With tongue-blades keener than a knife,
It probes the bleeding wounds of life,—
Lays bare the motive and the deed,
And carrion makes from flower-seed.

It mangles love, and smears with lust
Lilies of purity and trust,—
Battens on sins of king or slave,
And fouls with slime a new-made grave.

JAMES BARRON HOPE

(Virginia: 1827-1887)

THREE SUMMER STUDIES

I

THE cock hath crow'd. I hear the doors unbarr'd;
Down to the moss-grown porch my way I take,
And hear, beside the well within the yard,
Full many an ancient, quacking, splashing drake,
And gabbling goose, and noisy brood-hen — all
Responding to yon strutting gobbler's call.

The dew is thick upon the velvet grass —
The porch-rails hold it in translucent drops,
And as the cattle from th' enclosure pass,
Each one, alternate, slowly halts and crops
The tall, green spears, with all their dewy load,
Which grow beside the well-known pasture-road.

A lustrous polish is on all the leaves —
The birds flit in and out with varied notes —
The noisy swallows twitter 'neath the eaves —
A partridge whistle through the garden floats,

While yonder gaudy peacock harshly cries,
As red and gold flush all the eastern skies.

Up comes the sun: through the dense leaves a spot
  Of splendid light drinks up the dew; the breeze
Which late made leafy music dies; the day grows hot,
  And slumbrous sounds come from marauding bees;
The burnished river like a sword blade shines,
Save where 'tis shadowed by the solemn pines.

II

Over the farm is brooding silence now,—
  No reaper's song, no raven's clangor harsh,
No bleat of sheep, no distant low of cow,
  No croak of frogs within the spreading marsh,
No bragging cock from littered farmyard crows,—
The scene is steeped in silence and repose.

A trembling haze hangs over all the fields,—
  The panting cattle in the river stand,
Seeking the coolness which its wave scarce yields.
  It seems a Sabbath through the drowsy land:
So hushed is all beneath the Summer's spell,
I pause and listen for some faint church bell.

The leaves are motionless, the song bird's mute —
  The very air seems somnolent and sick:
The spreading branches with o'erripened fruit

Show in the sunshine all their clusters thick,
While now and then a mellow apple falls
With a dull sound within the orchard's walls.

The sky has but one solitary cloud,
Like a dark island in a sea of light;
The parching furrows 'twixt the corn rows plowed
Seem fairly dancing in my dazzled sight,
While over yonder road a dusty haze
Grows reddish purple in the sultry blaze.

III

That solitary cloud grows dark and wide,
While distant thunder rumbles in the air,
A fitful ripple breaks the river's tide—
The lazy cattle are no longer there,
But homeward come in long procession slow,
With many a bleat and many a plaintive low.

Darker and wider spreading o'er the west
Advancing clouds, each in fantastic form,
And mirrored turrets on the river's breast
Tell in advance the coming of a storm—
Closer and brighter glares the lightning's flash,
And louder, nearer, sounds the thunder's crash.

The air of evening is intensely hot,
The breeze feels heated as it fans my brows;

Now sullen raindrops patter down like shot,
  Strike in the grass, or rattle 'mid the boughs.
A sultry lull, and then a gust again,
And now I see the thick-advancing rain.

It fairly hisses as it comes along,
  And where it strikes bounds up again in spray
As if 'twere dancing to the fitful song
  Made by the trees, which twist themselves and sway
In contest with the wind which rises fast
Until the breeze becomes a furious blast.

And now, the sudden, fitful storm has fled,
  The clouds lie pil'd up in the splendid west,
In massive shadow tipp'd with purplish red,
  Crimson or gold. The scene is one of rest;
And on the bosom of yon still lagoon
I see the crescent of the pallid moon.

EDWARD HOWLAND

(South Carolina: 1832-1890)

THE CONDEMNED

READ me no moral, priest, upon my life,—
  Reserve that for your flock.
A few short hours will end my mortal strife,
  Upon the gallows block.

Before the gaping crowd, who come to see
  A fellow mortal die,
Preach if you choose, and take your text from me,—
  To them I cannot lie.

And still the less can I, a finite man,
  Pretend to cheat my God:
By him the workings of his mighty plan
  Are clearly understood.

Conceived in lust, brought up in sordid sin,
  How could I hope to be
Aught but the outcast I have ever been,
  Fruit for the gallows tree?

Go teach the children swarming through the town,
To-day exposed to all
The poverty and vice that drew me down,—
Save them before they fall.

But as for me, I die as I have lived,
As all men must,
Believing as I always have believed
That God is just.

CHARLES W. HUBNER

(Georgia: 1835 - ——)

I'M GROWING OLD

I'm growing old; and yet no fear
Of death or grave appalls me;
Still, as in days of youth, the dear
Sweet love of life enthralls me;
And still my spirit gladly hears
The music of the flying years.

I'm growing old; my hands, my limbs
Less supple are, less light;
And sometimes a strange mist bedims —
By tears begot — my sight,
But still with steady steps my soul
Fares bravely on toward her goal.

I'm growing old; Life's tree has shed
Its blossoms long ago;
The winds that blow about my head
Are chill with sleet and snow,
Yet they, in some mysterious way,
Still bring the violet scent of May.

I'm growing old; alas! so far
My youth behind me lies,
It seems to be a phantom-star
In dream-imagined skies,
And yet one touch of Memory's wand
Transports me to youth's fairy-land.

I'm growing old — how swiftly flies
Time's shuttle through the loom!
Weaving before my very eyes
My garment for the tomb;
Yet fear I not, nor feel I pain,
Beyond the grave I'll live again!

QUATRAINS

The World

I ASKED, "What is the world?" and you replied,
"Myself and you, by millions multiplied."
I said, "If what you say indeed be true,
The world is what we make it, I and you."

Duty

Executor of God's almighty will!
Thou, who His laws forever dost fulfill,
O, hold my heart, my will, in thy control,
And stamp thy sacred seal upon my soul.

Fame

Is it worth while to barter life for Fame? —
The winged, illusive phantom of a name,
The echo of a sound that dies at last,
Lost in ghost-haunted deserts of the Past.

WHEN WE WERE TWENTY-ONE

When we were twenty-one, O Life,
How fair you seemed, how glorious!
Hope's banner waving o'er us,
The whole wide world before us,
We scoffed at sorrow, laughed at strife —
When we were twenty-one.

When we were twenty-one, the flame
Of Youth's desire burned brightly,
Fair Fancy's feet tripped lightly,
To music sweet and sprightly;
We dreamt of love, of wealth, of fame,
When we were twenty-one.

When we were twenty-one, Romance
Her glamour shed about us;
The doubts that dared to flout us,
The cares that rose to rout us,
We slew with Love's celestial lance,
When we were twenty-one.

When we were twenty-one, we roved
Through lands that seemed Elysian,
Bewitched by many a vision,
Despite the world's derision;
We only knew we lived and loved —
When we were twenty-one.

When we were twenty-one, alas!
So real looked life's seeming,
So bright its stars were beaming,
How could we help our dreaming?
But what a glorious dream it was —
When we were twenty-one.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

(Virginia: 1743-1826)

LOVELY PEGGY

ONCE more I'll tune the vocal shell
To hills and dales my passion tell,
A flame which time can never quell
That burns for lovely Peggy.

Ye greater bards the lyre should hit,
For say what subject is more fit
Than to record the sparkling wit
And bloom of lovely Peggy.

The sun first rising in the morn
That paints the dew-bespangled thorn
Does not so much the day adorn
As does my lovely Peggy.

And when in Thetis' lap to rest
He streaks with gold the ruddy west,
He's not so beauteous as undrest
Appears my lovely Peggy.

With her a cottage would delight,
All's happy when she's in my sight,
But when she's gone, 'tis endless night,
All's dark without my Peggy.

The Zephyr's air the violet blows
Or breath upon the damask rose —
He does not half the sweets disclose
That does my lovely Peggy.

I stole a kiss the other day,
And trust me, nought but truth I say,
The fragrant breath of blooming May
Was not so sweet as Peggy.

While bees from flow'r to flow'r shall rove,
And linnets warble through the grove,
Or stately swans the waters love,
So long shall I love Peggy.

And when death with his pointed dart
Shall strike the blow that rives my heart,
My words shall be when I depart,
Adieu, my lovely Peggy.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

(Maryland: 1780-1843)

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

Oh! say, can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the clouds of the fight
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O, say, does that Star-Spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the Star-Spangled banner; O, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free. and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;
And the Star-Spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—*"In God is our Trust"*—
And the Star-Spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

SIDNEY LANIER

(Georgia: 1842-1881)

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him — last
When out of the woods He came.

AN EVENING SONG

Look off, dear love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands,
Ah! longer we!

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'T is done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands;
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart —
Never our lips, our hands.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried, *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall.
The laving laurels turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said, *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed, *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
— Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,

Ruby, garnet, and amethyst —
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

SUNRISE

In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep,
Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-liberties, drifting,
Came through the lapped leaves sifting, sifting,
Came to the gates of sleep.
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City of Sleep,

Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling:
The gates of sleep fell a-trembling
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter *yes*
Shaken with happiness:
The gates of sleep stood wide.

I have waked, I have come, my beloved! I might not abide:
I have come ere the dawn, O beloved, my live-oaks, to hide
In your gospeling glooms,— to be
As a lover in heaven, the marsh my marsh and the sea my sea.

Tell me, sweet burly-bark'd, man-bodied Tree
That mine arms in the dark are embracing, dost know
From what fount are these tears at thy feet which flow?
They rise not from reason, but deeper inconsequent deeps.
Reason's not one that weeps.
What logic of greeting lies
Betwixt dear over-beautiful trees and the rain of the eyes?

O cunning green leaves, little masters! like as ye gloss
All the dull-tissued dark with your luminous darks that emboss
The vague blackness of night into pattern and plan,
So,
(But would I could know, but would I could know,)

With your question embroid'ring the dark of the question of man,—
So, with your silences purfling this silence of man
While his cry to the dead for some knowledge is under the ban,
Under the ban,—
So, ye have wrought me
Designs on the night of our knowledge,— yea, ye have taught me,
So,
That haply we know somewhat more than we know.

Ye lispers, whisperers, singers in storms,
Ye consciences murmuring faiths under forms,
Ye ministers meet for each passion that grieves,
Friendly, sisterly, sweetheart leaves,
Oh, rain me down from your darks that contain me
Wisdoms ye winnow from winds that pain me,—
Sift down tremors of sweet-within-sweet
That advise me of more than they bring,— repeat
Me the woods-smell that swiftly but now brought breath
From the heaven-side bank of the river of death,—
Teach me the terms of silence,— preach me
The passion of patience,— sift me,— impeach me,—
And there, oh there
As ye hang with your myriad palms upturned in the air,
Pray me a myriad prayer.

My gossip, the owl,— is it thou
That out of the leaves of the low-hanging bough,
As I pass to the beach, art stirred?
Dumb woods, have ye uttered a bird?

* * * * * * * *

Reverend Marsh, low-couched along the sea,
Old chemist, rapt in alchemy,
Distilling silence,— lo,
That which our father-age had died to know —
The menstruum that dissolves all matter — thou
Hast found it; for this silence, filling now
The globèd clarity of receiving space,
This solves us all: man, matter, doubt, disgrace,
Death, love, sin, sanity,
Must in yon silence' clear solution lie.
Too clear! That crystal nothing who'll peruse?
The blackest night could bring us brighter news.
Yet precious qualities of silence haunt
Round these vast margins, ministrant.
Oh, if thy soul's at latter gasp for space,
With trying to breathe no bigger than thy race
Just to be fellow'd, when that thou hast found
No man with room, or grace enough of bound
To entertain that New thou tell'st, thou art,—
'T is here, 't is here thou canst unhand thy heart
And breathe it free, and breathe it free,
By rangy marsh, in lone sea-liberty.

The tide 's at full: the marsh with flooded streams
Glimmers, a limpid labyrinth of dreams.
Each winding creek in grave entrancement lies
A rhapsody of morning-stars. The skies
Shine scant with one forked galaxy,—
The marsh brags ten: looped on his breast they lie.

Oh, what if a sound should be made!
Oh, what if a bound should be laid
To this bow-and-string tension of beauty and silence a-spring,—
To the bend of beauty the bow, or the hold of silence the string!
I fear me, I fear me yon dome of diaphanous gleam
Will break as a bubble o'er-blown in a dream,—
Yon dome of too-tenuous tissues of space and of night,
Over-weighted with stars, over-freighted with light,
Over-sated with beauty and silence, will seem
But a bubble that broke in a dream,
If a bound of degree to this grace be laid,
Or a sound or a motion made.

But no: it is made: list! somewhere,— mystery, where?
In the leaves? in the air?
In my heart? is a motion made;
'T is a motion of dawn, like a flicker of shade on shade.
In the leaves, 't is palpable: low multitudinous stirring
Upwinds through the woods; the little ones, softly conferring,

Have settled my lord's to be looked for; so; they are still;
But the air and my heart and the earth are a-thrill,—
And look where the wild duck sails round the bend of the river,—
And look where a passionate shiver
Expectant is bending the blades
Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and shades,—
And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast fleeting,
Are beating
The dark overhead as my heart beats,—and steady and free
Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea—
(Run home, little streams,
With your lapfuls of stars and dreams),—
And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,
For list, down the inshore curve of the creek
How merrily flutters the sail,—
And lo, in the East! Will the East unveil?
The East is unveiled, the East hath confessed
A flush; 't is dead; 't is alive; 't is dead, ere the West
Was aware of it; nay, 't is abiding, 't is unwithdrawn:
Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'T is Dawn.

Now a dream of a flame through that dream of a flush is uprolled;
To the zenith ascending, a dome of undazzling gold
Is builded, in shape as a bee-hive, from out of the sea;

The hive is of gold undazzling, but oh, the Bee,
The star-fed Bee, the build-fire Bee,
Of dazzling gold is the great Sun-Bee
That shall flash from the hive-hole over the sea.

Yet now the dew-drop, now the morning gray,
Shall live their little lucid sober day
Ere with the sun their souls exhale away.
Now in each pettiest personal sphere of dew
The summ'd morn shines complete as in the blue
Big dew-drop of all heaven; with these lit shrines
O'er-silvered to the farthest sea-confines,
The sacramental marsh one pious plain
Of worship lies. Peace to the ante-reign
Of Mary Morning, blissful mother mild,
Minded of nought but peace, and of a child.
Not slower than Majesty moves, for a mean and a measure
Of motion,— not faster than dateless Olympian leisure
Might pace with unblown ample garments from pleasure to pleasure,—
The wave-serrate sea-rim sinks unjarring, unreeling,
Forever revealing, revealing, revealing,
Edgewise, bladewise, halfwise, wholewise,—'t is done!
Good-morrow, lord Sun!
With several voice, with ascription one,
The woods and the marsh and the sea and my soul

Unto thee, whence the glittering stream of all morrows
doth roll,
Cry good and past-good and most heavenly morrow, lord
Sun.

O Artisan born in the purple,— Workman Heat,—
Parter of passionate atoms that travail to meet
And be mixed in the death-cold oneness,— innermost
Guest
At the marriage of elements,— fellow of publicans,—
blest
King in the blouse of flame, that loiterest o'er
The idle skies yet laborest fast evermore,—
Thou, in the fine forge-thunder, thou, in the beat
Of the heart of a man, thou Motive,— Laborer Heat:
Yea, Artist, thou, of whose art yon sea 's all news,
With his inshore greens and manifold mid-sea blues,
Pearl-glint, shell-tint, ancientest perfectest hues
Ever shaming the maidens,— lily and rose
Confess thee, and each mild flame that glows
In the clarified virginal bosoms of stones that shine,
It is thine, it is thine:

Thou chemist of storms, whether driving the winds
a-swirl
Or a-flicker the subtiler essences polar that whirl
In the magnet earth,— yea, thou with a storm for a heart,
Rent with debate, many-spotted with question, part

From part oft sundered, yet ever a globèd light,
Yet ever the artist, ever more large and bright
Than the eye of a man may avail of: — manifold One,
I must pass from thy face, I must pass from the face of the Sun;
Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;
The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town;
But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;
I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun;
How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run,
I am lit with the sun.

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-colored smoke of the factories
Hide thee,
Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night shall with knowledge abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that hath tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art,— till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noonday fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noonday sun of the June-day long did shine

Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in
mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken the soul of
the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome
sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep of the
marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have wrought me
of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was but bit-
terness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary unnamable
pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the plain,—

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a belt of the
dawn,

For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark: —
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—
Thus — with your favor — soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,

Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:

Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the floodtide must be;
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy;
The tide is at his highest height;
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvelous marshes of Glynn.

JAMES MATTHEWS LEGARE

(South Carolina: 1823-1859)

TO A LILY

Go bow thy head in gentle spite,
Thou lily white,
For she who spies thee waving here,
With thee in beauty can compare
As day with night.

Soft are thy leaves and white: her arms
Boast whiter charms.
Thy stem prone bent with loveliness
Of maiden grace possesseth less:
Therein she charms.

Thou in thy lake dost see
Thyself: so she
Beholds her image in her eyes
Reflected. Thus did Venus rise
From out the sea.

Inconsolate, bloom not again.
Thou rival vain
Of her whose charms have thine outdone,
Whose purity might spot the sun,
And make thy leaf a stain.

JOHN CHARLES McNEILL

(North Carolina: 1874-1907)

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

Near where the shepherds watched by night
And heard the angels o'er them,
The wise men saw the starry light
Stand still at last before them.
No armored castle there to ward
His precious life from danger,
But, wrapped in common cloth, our Lord
Lay in a lowly manger.
No booming bells proclaimed his birth,
No armies marshaled by,
No iron thunders shook the earth,
No rockets clomb the sky;
The temples builded in his name
Were shapeless granite then,
And all the choirs that sang his fame
Were later breeds of men.
But, while the world about him slept,
Nor cared that he was born,
One gentle face above him kept
Its mother watch till morn;

And, if his baby eyes could tell
  What grace and glory were,
No roar of gun, no boom of bell
  Were worth the look of her.
Now praise to God that ere his grace
  Was scorned and he reviled
He looked into his mother's face,
  A little helpless child;
And praise to God that ere men strove
  About his tomb in war
One loved him with a mother's love
  Nor knew a creed therefor.

A FEW DAYS OFF

I AIN'T gwine a work till my dyin' day;
  'F I ever lays up enough,
I's gwine a go off a while en stay;
  I'll be takin' a few days off.
'Ca'se de jimson weeds don't bloom but once,
  En when dey's shed dey's shed;
En when you's dead, 'tain't jis' a few mont's,
  But you's gwine be a long time dead.

I knowed a' ol' man died powerful rich —
  Two mules en lan' en a cow.
I jus' soon die fum fallin' in a ditch,
  Fur he went to's grave fum's plough.

He never had nothin' 'twas good to eat
  Ner no piller upon his bed;
He never took time to dance wid his feet,
  But he's gwine a take long time dead.

I know a' ol' woman wut scrubbed and hoed,
  En never didn' go nowhar,
En when she died de people 'knowed
  Dat she had supp'n hid 'bout dar.
She mought a dressed up en a-done supp'n' wrong
  En had 'er a coht-case ple'd;
But she didn' have time to live veh long;
  She's gwine have a plenty dead.

So I says, if I manage to save enough
  Frum de wages I gits dis yur,
I is right den takin' a few days off
  At one time en an'er.
'Ca'se while I is got my mouf en eyes
  En a little wheel in my head,
I's gwine a live fas', fer when I dies
  I'll sho' be a long time dead.

DAWN

The hills again reach skyward with a smile.
  Again, with waking life along its way,
The landscape marches westward mile on mile
  And time throbs white into another day.

Though eager life must wait on livelihood,
And all our hopes be tethered to the mart,
Lacking the eagle's wild, high freedom, would
That ours might be this day the eagle's heart!

THE BRIDE

The little white bride is left alone
With him, her lord; the guests have gone;
The festal hall is dim.
No jesting now, nor answering mirth.
The hush of sleep falls on the earth
And leaves her here with him.

Why should there be, O little white bride,
When the world has left you by his side,
A tear to brim your eyes?
Some old love-face that comes again,
Some old love-moments sweet with pain
Of passionate memories?

Does your heart yearn back with last regret
For the maiden meads of mignonette
And the fairy-haunted wood,
That you had not withheld from love,
A little while, the freedom of
Your happy maidenhood?

Or is it but a nameless fear,
A wordless joy, that calls the tear
In dumb appeal to rise,
When, looking on him where he stands,
You yield up all into his hands,
Pleading into his eyes?

For days that laugh or nights that weep
You two strike oars across the deep
With life's tide at the brim;
And all time's beauty, all love's grace
Beams, little bride, upon your face
Here, looking up at him.

THE RATTLESNAKE

Coiled like a clod, his eyes the home of hate,
Where rich the harvest bows, he lies in wait,
Linking earth's death and music, mate with mate.

Is't lure, or warning? Those small bells may sing
Like Ariel sirens, poised on viewless wing,
To lead stark life where mailèd death is king;

Else nature's voice, in that cold, earthy thrill,
Bids good avoid the venomed fang of ill,
And life and death fight equal in her will.

THE WIFE

They locked him in a prison cell,
  Murky and mean.
She kissed him there a wife's farewell,
  The bars between.
And when she turned to go, the crowd,
Thinking to see her shamed and bowed,
Saw her pass out as calm and proud
  As any queen.

She passed a kinsman on the street,
  To whose sad eyes
She made reply with smile as sweet
  As April skies.
To one who loved her once and knew
The sorrow of her life, she threw
A gay word, ere his tale was due
  Of sympathies.

She met a playmate, whose red rose
  Had never a thorn,
Whom fortune guided when she chose
  Her marriage morn,
And, smiling, looked her in the eyes;
But, seeing the tears of sympathy,
Her smile died, and she passed on by
  In quiet scorn.

They could not know how, when by night
The city slept,
A sleepless woman, still and white,
The watches kept;
How her wife-loyal heart had borne
The keen pain of a flowerless thorn,
How hot the tears that smiles and scorn
Had held unwept.

TRIFLES

WHAT shall I bring you, sweet?
A posy prankt with every April hue:
The cloud-white daisy, violet sky-blue,
Shot with the primrose sunshine through and through?

Or shall I bring you, sweet,
Some ancient rhyme of lovers sore beset,
Whose joy is dead, whose sadness lingers yet,
That you may read, and sigh, and soon forget?

What shall I bring you, sweet?
Was ever trifle yet so held amiss
As not to fill love's waiting heart with bliss,
And merit dalliance at a long, long kiss?

VALENTINE

THIS is the time for birds to mate;
To-day the dove
Will mark the ancient amorous date
With moans of love;
The crow will change his call to prate
His hopes thereof.

The starling will display the red
That lights his wings;
The wren will know the sweet things said
By him who swings
And ducks and dips his crested head
And sings and sings.

They are obedient to their blood,
Nor ask a sign,
Save buoyant air and swelling bud,
At hands divine,
But choose, each in the barren wood,
His valentine.

In caution's maze they never wait
Until they die;
They flock the season's open gate
Ere time steals by.
Love, shall we see and imitate,
You, love, and I?

TWO PICTURES

One sits in soft light, where the hearth is warm,
A halo, like an angel's, on her hair.
She clasps a sleeping infant in her arm.
A holy presence hovers round her there,
And she, for all her mother-pains more fair,
Is happy, seeing that all sweet thoughts that stir
The hearts of men bear worship unto her.

Another wanders where the cold wind blows,
Wet-haired, with eyes that sting one like a knife.
Homeless forever, at her bosom close
She holds the purchase of her love and life,
Of motherhood, unglorified as wife;
And bitterer than the world's relentless scorn
The knowing her child were happier never born.

Whence are the halo and the fiery shame
That fashion thus a crown and curse of love?
Have roted words such power to bless and blame?
Ay, men have stained a raven from many a dove,
And all the grace and all the grief hereof
Are the two words which bore one's lips apart
And which the other hoarded in her heart.

He who stooped down and wrote upon the sand,
The God-heart in him touched to tenderness,
Saw deep, saw what we can not understand,—

We, who draw near the shrine of one to bless
The while we scourge another's sore distress,
And judge like gods between the ill and good,
The glory and the guilt of womanhood.

WALTER MALONE

(Mississippi: 1866 - ——)

OCTOBER IN TENNESSEE

Far, far away, beyond a hazy height,
The turquoise skies are hung in dreamy sleep;
Below, the fields of cotton, fleecy-white,
Are spreading like a mighty flock of sheep.

Now, like Aladdin of the days of old,
October robes the weeds in purple gowns;
He sprinkles all the sterile fields with gold,
And all the rustic trees wear royal crowns.

The straggling fences all are interlaced
With pink and azure morning-glory blooms,
The starry asters glorify the waste,
While grasses stand on guard with pikes and plumes.

Yet still amid the splendor of decay
The chill winds call for blossoms that are dead,
The cricket chirps for sunshine passed away,
And lovely Summer songsters that have fled.

And lonesome in a haunt of withered vines,
Amid the flutter of her withered leaves,

Pale Summer for her perished Kingdom pines,
And all the glories of her golden sheaves.

In vain October woos her to remain
Within the palace of his scarlet bowers,
Entreats her to forget her heart-break pain,
And weep no more above her faded flowers.

At last November, like a Conqueror, comes
To storm the golden city of his foe;
We hear his rude winds, like the roll of drums,
Bringing their desolation and their woe.

The sunset, like a vast vermilion flood,
Splashes its giant glowing waves on high,
The forest flames with foliage red as blood,
A conflagration sweeping to the sky.

Then all the treasures of that brilliant state
Are gathered in a mighty funeral pyre;
October, like a King resigned to fate,
Dies in his forest, with their sunset fire.

OPPORTUNITY

They do me wrong who say I come no more
When once I knock and fail to find you in;
For every day I stand outside your door,
And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances past away,
  Weep not for golden ages on the wane!
Each night I burn the records of the day,—
  At sunrise every soul is born again!

Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped,
  To vanished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;
My judgments seal the dead past with its dead,
  But never bind a moment yet to come.

Though deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep:
  I lend my arm to all who say "I can!"
No shame-faced outcast ever sank so deep,
  But yet might rise and be again a man!

Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?
  Dost reel from righteous Retribution's blow?
Then turn from blotted archives of the past,
  And find the future's pages white as snow.

Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell;
  Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven;
Each morning gives thee wings to flee from hell,
  Each night a star to guide thy feet to heaven.

GEORGE HENRY MILES

(Maryland: 1824-1871)

SAID THE ROSE

I AM weary of the garden,
  Said the Rose;
For the winter winds are sighing,
All my playmates round me dying,
And my leaves will soon be lying
  'Neath the snows.

But I hear my Mistress coming,
  Said the Rose;
She will take me to her chamber,
Where the honeysuckles clamber,
And I'll bloom there all December,
  'Spite the snows.

Sweeter fell her lily finger
  Than the Bee!
Ah! how feebly I resisted,
Smoothed my thorns, and e'en assisted
As all blushing I was twisted
  Off my tree.

And she fixed me in her bosom
  Like a star;
And I flashed there all the morning,
Jasmine, honeysuckle scorning,
Parasites forever fawning
  That they are.

And when evening came she set me
  In a vase
All of rare and radiant metal,
And I felt her red lips settle
On my leaves till each proud petal
  Touched her face.

And I shone about her slumbers
  Like a light;
And I said, "Instead of weeping,
In the garden vigil keeping,
Here I'll watch my Mistress sleeping
  Every night."

But when morning with its sunbeams
  Softly shone,
In the mirror where she braided
Her brown hair I saw how jaded,
Old and colorless and faded
  I had grown.

Not a drop of dew was on me,
Never one;
From my leaves no odors started,
All my perfume had departed,
I lay pale and broken-hearted
In the sun.

Still, I said her smile is better
Than the rain;
Though my fragrance may forsake me,
To her bosom she will take me
And with crimson kisses make me
Young again.

So she took me — gazed a second —
Half a sigh —
Then, alas! can hearts so harden?
Without ever asking pardon,
Threw me back into the garden,
There to die.

How the jealous garden gloried
In my fall!
How the honeysuckles chid me,
How the sneering jasmines bid me
Light the long gray grass that hid me
Like a pall.

There I lay beneath her window
In a swoon,
Till the earthworm o'er me trailing
Woke me, just at twilight's failing,
As the whip-poor-will was wailing
To the moon.

But I hear the storm winds stirring
In their lair;
And I know they soon will lift me
In their giant arms and sift me
Into ashes as they drift me
Through the air.

So I pray them in their mercy
Just to take
From my heart of hearts, or near it,
The last living leaf, and bear it
To her feet, and bid her wear it
For my sake.

IDA GOLDSMITH MORRIS

(Kentucky: 18— - ——)

ADRIFT

Sometimes, when after years of vain regret,
I cheat myself into the fond belief
That I have conquered love and vanquished grief,
Some little thing,— a spray of mignonette,
A careless word, the air of that duet
We used to sing, perchance a turned-down leaf
In the last book we read,— and lo, how brief
My boasted calm! Behold, my eyes are wet;
And barriers, built with patience, day by day,
By the remorseless flood are swept away,
While, on the waves of Memory I drift
Far from the harbor of my self-deceit:
Borne, unresisting, in the current swift,
That drowns my will and flings me at thy feet!

CHILDLESS

The sleeping echoes of her quiet room
Are never waked by bursts of childish glee.
And up the polished staircase never come

Light patterings of footsteps swift and free.
Alone she sits and, in the twilight gloom,
Dreams happily of what shall never be!

Sometimes her wistful fancy strews the floor
(Rich-carpeted and neat) with broken toys;
Paints finger-prints on window-glass and door,
Hears echoes of shrill laughter and rude noise;
All that a tired mother might deplore
Would seem to her starved heart as priceless joys.

Till, from the world without, some sudden note
Of childish voices through her vision rings,
And sobs of anguish rise to her white throat,
Round which no dimpled arm in mischief clings;
Gone are the sweet dream-fancies, as may float
From earth to heaven the flash of angel-wings.

And yet, no little empty crib is there
To mock the mother-arms, outstretched in vain;
She hoards no shining tress of silken hair;
No tiny grave where buried hopes lie slain;
Only the deeper loss she has to bear
Upon whose heart no babe of hers has lain!

THAT LITTLE CHAP OF MINE

I KNOW I'm jest an ordinary, easy-goin' cuss,
'Bout like the common run of men, no better an' no wuss.
I can't lay claim to anything as fur as looks may go,
An' when it comes to learning, why, I don't stand any show.
But thar must be somethin more in me than other folks kin see,
'Cause I've got a little chap at home that thinks a heap of me.

I've had my ups an' downs in life, as most folks have, I guess,
An' take it all in all, I couldn't brag of much success.
But it braces up a feller, an' it tickles him to know
Thar's some one that takes stock in him, no matter how things go;
An' when I git the worst of it, I'm proud as I kin be,
To know that little chap of mine still thinks a heap of me.

To feel his little hand in mine, so trustin' an' so warm,
To know he thinks I'm strong enough to keep him from all harm,
To see his lovin' faith in all that I kin say or do —
It sort o' shames a feller, but it makes him better, too.
An' so I try to be the man he fancies me to be,
Jest 'cause that little chap of mine, he thinks a heap of me.

I wouldn't disappoint his trust for anything on earth,
Or let him know how little I jest natchully am worth.
An' after all, it's easy up the better road to climb,
With a little hand to help you on an' guide you all the time.
An' I reckon I'm a better man than what I used to be,
Since I've got a little chap at home that thinks a heap of me.

ISRAEL

She stands among the nations of the earth,
Unique — a figure of pathetic grace,
God's chosen daughter of the human race,
Destined to woe and grandeur from her birth.
She sees her children scattered, doomed to dearth,
And in her dusky eyes there shines the trace
Of tears, that wet her pale, prophetic face,
(Knowing her people's pristine power and worth) —

O stricken mother, unto whom we owe
The light and life that springs from one pure fount,
Whence all our laws and inspirations flow,
Not vainly have you shed your blood and tears,
Withstanding scorn and hatred all these years;
He guards you still, Who spoke from Sinai's mount.

REMEMBRANCE

DEAR, do not dream I have forgotten thee,
Though life goes on in its accustomed way.
There is no single hour in any day
That is not set with gems of memory;
And, though I wage no war with destiny,
I have shut in with that dear, senseless clay,
That sleeps beneath the lilies (fair as they),
All my heart's wealth and love's lost ecstasy.
The last, long pressure of thy hand in mine
Has kept it pure as those sealed lips of thine
(That nevermore shall part with smiles for me,
Since death has kissed to whiteness their warm red.)
Dear, never dream I have forgotten thee,
Thy soul and mine are one, by memory wed.

THEODORE O'HARA

(Kentucky: 1820-1867)

THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD

THE muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind;
No troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;
No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dream alarms;
No braying horn nor screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.

Their shivered swords are red with rust,
Their plumèd heads are bowed;

Their haughty banner, trailed in dust,
Is now their martial shroud.
And plenteous funeral tears have washed
The red stains from each brow,
And the proud forms, by battle gashed,
Are free from anguish now.

The neighing troop, the flashing blade,
The bugle's stirring blast,
The charge, the dreadful cannonade,
The din and shout, are past;
Nor war's wild note nor glory's peal
Shall thrill with fierce delight
Those breasts that never more may feel
The rapture of the fight.

Like the fierce northern hurricane
That sweeps this great plateau,
Flushed with triumph yet to gain,
Came down the serried foe.
Who heard the thunder of the fray
Break o'er the field beneath,
Knew well the watchword of that day
Was "Victory or death."

Long has the doubtful conflict raged
O'er all that stricken plain,
For never fiercer fight had waged
The vengeful blood of Spain;

And still the storm of battle blew,
Still swelled the gory tide;
Not long, our stout old chieftain knew,
Such odds his strength could bide.

'Twas in that hour his stern command
Called to a martyr's grave
The flower of his belovèd band
The nation's flag to save.
By rivers of their fathers' gore
His first-born laurels grew,
And well he deemed the sons would pour
Their lives for glory too.

Full many a norther's breath has swept
O'er Angostura's plain,
And long the pitying sky has wept
Above its mouldering slain.
The raven's scream, or eagle's flight,
Or shepherd's pensive lay,
Alone awakes each sullen height
That frowned o'er that dread fray.

Sons of the Dark and Bloody Ground,
Ye must not slumber there,
Where stranger steps and tongues resound
Along the heedless air.
Your own proud land's heroic soil
Shall be your fitter grave;

She claims from War his richest spoil,—
The ashes of her brave.

Thus 'neath their parent turf they rest,
Far from the gory field,
Borne to a Spartan mother's breast
On many a bloody shield;
The sunlight of their native sky
Smiles sadly on them here,
And kindred eyes and hearts watch by
The heroes' sepulchre.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footstep here shall tread
The herbage of your grave,—
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone
In deathless song shall tell
When many a vanished age hath flown,
The story how ye fell;
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winter's blight,
Nor Time's remorseless doom,
Shall dim one ray of glory's light
That gilds your glorious tomb.

H. F. PAGE

(North Carolina: 1873 - ——)

THE LAST NIGHT AT APPOMATTOX

West — ebbing day,
Then twilight gray
And dusk-glooms gathering slow.

Sad, whispering pines,
Tattered tent lines,
And camp fires glimmering low.

Forms, swarthy, worn —
Gray, battle-torn,
Move sadly in the light.

The Southern Bars,
The Cross, the Stars
Last-folded lie to-night!

JOHN WILLIAMSON PALMER

(Maryland: 1825-1896)

STONEWALL JACKSON'S WAY

Come, stack arms, men; pile on the rails;
  Stir up the camp-fire bright!
No growling if the canteen fails:
  We'll make a roaring night.
Here Shenandoah brawls along,
There burly Blue Ridge echoes strong,
To swell the Brigade's rousing song,
  Of Stonewall Jackson's Way.

We see him now — the queer slouched hat,
  Cocked o'er his eye askew;
The shrewd, dry smile; the speech so pat,
  So calm, so blunt, so true.
The "Blue-light Elder" knows 'em well:
Says he, "That's Banks; he's fond of shell.
Lord save his soul! we'll give him — ;" Well,
  That's Stonewall Jackson's Way!

Silence! Ground arms! Kneel all! Caps off!
  Old Massa's going to pray.

Strangle the fool that dares to scoff:
Attention! — it's his way.
Appealing from his native sod,
In forma pauperis to God,
"Lay bare Thine arm! Stretch forth Thy rod:
Amen!"— That's Stonewall's Way.

He's in the saddle now. Fall in!
Steady! the whole brigade.
Hill's at the ford, cut off; we'll win
His way out, ball and blade.
What matter if our shoes are worn?
What matter if our feet are torn?
Quick step! we're with him before morn:
That's Stonewall Jackson's Way.

The sun's bright lances rout the mists
Of morning; and — By George!
Here's Longstreet, struggling in the lists,
Hemmed in an ugly gorge.
Pope and his Dutchmen! — whipped before.
"Bay'nets and grape!" hear Stonewall roar.
Charge, Stuart! Pay off Ashby's score,
In Stonewall Jackson's Way.

Ah, Maiden! wait and watch and yearn
For news of Stonewall's band.
Ah, Widow! read, with eyes that burn,
That ring upon thy hand.

Ah, Wife! sew on, pray on, hope on!
Thy life shall not be all forlorn.
The foe had better ne'er been born,
That gets in Stonewall's Way.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

(Alabama: 1854-——)

BESSIE BROWN, M. D.

'Twas April when she came to town;
The birds had come, the bees were swarming.
Her name, she said, was Doctor Brown:
I saw at once that she was charming.
She took a cottage tinted green,
Where dewy roses loved to mingle;
And on the door, next day, was seen
A dainty little shingle.

Her hair was like an amber wreath;
Her hat was darker, to enhance it.
The violet eyes that glowed beneath
Were brighter than her keenest lancet.
The beauties of her glove and gown
The sweetest rhyme would fail to utter,
Ere she had been a day in town
The town was in a flutter.

The gallants viewed her feet and hands
And swore they never saw such wee things;

The gossips met in purring bands
And tore her piecemeal o'er the tea-things.
The former drank the Doctor's health
With clinking cups, the gay carousers;
The latter watched her door by stealth,
Just like so many mousers.

But Doctor Bessie went her way
Unmindful of the spiteful cronies,
And drove her buggy every day
Behind a dashing pair of ponies.
Her flower-like face so bright she bore,
I hoped that time might never wilt her.
The way she tripped across the floor
Was better than a philter.

Her patients thronged the village street;
Her snowy slate was always quite full.
Some said her bitters tasted sweet;
And some pronounced her pills delightful.
'Twas strange — I knew not what it meant —
She seemed a nymph from Eldorado;
Where'er she came, where'er she went,
Grief lost its gloomy shadow.

Like all the rest, I too grew ill;
My aching heart there was no quelling.
I tremble at my doctor's bill,—
And lo! the items still are swelling.

The drugs I've drunk you'd weep to hear!
They've quite enriched the fair concocter,
And I'm a ruined man, I fear,
Unless — I wed the Doctor!

DOLLIE

She sports a witching gown
With a ruffle up and down
On the skirt.
She is gentle, she is shy;
But there's mischief in her eye,
She's a flirt!

She displays a tiny glove,
And a dainty little love
Of a shoe;
And she wears her hat a-tilt
Over bangs that never wilt
In the dew.

'Tis rumored chocolate creams
Are the fabric of her dreams —
But enough!
I know beyond a doubt
That she carries them about
In her muff.

With her dimples and her curls
She exasperates the girls
  Past belief:
They hint that she's a cat,
And delightful things like that
  In their grief.

It is shocking, I declare!
But what does Dollie care
  When the beaux
Come flocking to her feet
Like the bees around a sweet
  Little rose?

LILLIAN'S FAN

Little fan, of fluff and pearl,
Tell me, pray, is life a whirl
  Of delight?
In Folly's fickle crew
There is naught as blithe as you,
  Or as bright.

You know no other skies
Save my lady's azure eyes
  All a-gleam;
And beneath them, night and day,
Lo, the moments glide away
  Like a dream.

Each silver strain a-float
From my lady's slender throat
  You have heard;
And oftentimes you nest
In the roses at her breast
  Like a bird.

Oh, the blushes you have hid,
And the notes behind you slid,
  Naughty fan!
The witcheries you weave,
Have the cunning to deceive
  Any man.

Humanity rebels
If I mention half the spells
  You employ;
You laugh at breaking hearts,
And a lover's aching smarts
  You enjoy.

Yet, in spite of everything,
Still I bless your snowy wing,
  When you dare
To screen her head and mine
So "mamma" may not divine
  Who is there.

I envy you her touch —
Oh, I can not tell how much;
It is sad!
Just to see her gayly tip
You against her cheery lip
Drives me mad!

Alas, I would I knew
Half the secrets known to you,
Dainty fan!
As it is, my fate I guess,
In Damoclean distress,
As I can.

Beauty's pet, a word aside,—
While you flutter in your pride
Have a care;
Or ere the season's through
She may weary too of you,
So beware!

THE GRAPEVINE SWING

When I was a boy on the old plantation,
Down by the deep bayou,
The fairest spot of all creation,
Under the arching blue;

When the wind came over the cotton and corn,
To the long slim loop I'd spring
With brown feet bare, and a hat brim torn,
And swing in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing,
I dream and sigh
For the days gone by,
Swinging in the grapevine swing!

Out — o'er the water lilies bonnie and bright,
Back — to the moss-grown tree;
I shouted and laughed with a heart as bright
As a wild rose tossed by the breeze.
The mocking bird joined in my reckless glee,
I longed for no angel's wing —
I was just as near heaven as I wanted to be
Swinging in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing,
O to be a boy
With a heart full of joy,
Swinging in the grapevine swing!

I'm weary at noon, I'm weary at night,
I'm fretted and sore at heart,

And care is sowing my locks with white
As I wend through the fevered mart.
I'm tired of the world, with its pride and pomp,
And fame seems a worthless thing.
I'd barter it all for one day's romp,
And a swing in the grapevine swing.

Swinging in the grapevine swing,
Laughing where the wild birds sing,
I would I were away
From the world to-day,
Swinging in the grapevine swing!

SARAH MORGAN BRYAN PIATT

(Kentucky: 18——)

THE WITCH IN THE GLASS

"My mother says I must not pass
Too near that glass;
She is afraid that I will see
A little witch that looks like me,
With a red, red mouth to whisper low
The very thing I should not know!"

"Alack for all your mother's care!
A bird of the air,
A wistful wind, or (I suppose
Sent by some hapless boy) a rose,
With breath too sweet, will whisper low
The very thing you should not know!"

EDWARD COATE PINKNEY

(Maryland: 1802-1828)

A HEALTH

I FILL this cup to one made up
  Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
  The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
  And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
  'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
  Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
  Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
  And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burdened bee
  Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
  The measures of her hours;

Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers,
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face, one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory such as mine of her
So very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon —
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

THE SERENADE

Look out upon the stars, my love,
And shame them with thine eyes,
On which, than on the lights above,
There hang more destinies;
Night's beauty is the harmony
Of blending shades and light;
Then, Lady, up — look out, and be
A sister to the Night!

Sleep not! Thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast;
Sleep not! from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest;
Nay, Lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make the darkness gay,
With looks, whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

(Virginia: 1809-1849)

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow:
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep, while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?

O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,—
I and my Annabel Lee,—
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me;
Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling — my darling — my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

BRIDAL BALLAD

THE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well;
But when first he breathed his vow
I felt my bosom swell,
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed his who fell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a revery came o'er me,
And to the churchyard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And though my faith be broken,
And though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That proves me happy now!

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

FOR ANNIE

Thank Heaven! the crisis —
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last,
And the fever called "Living"
Is conquered at last.

Sadly I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length;
But no matter! I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composed,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart,—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing!—
The sickness, the nausea,
The pitiless pain,
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain,
With the fever called "Living"
That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the naphthaline river
Of Passion accurst;
I have drunk of a water
That quenches all thirst,—

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground,
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
  And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
  In a different bed—
And, to sleep, you must slumber
  In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
  Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
  Regretting, its roses—
Its old agitations
  Of myrtles and roses;

For now, while so quietly
  Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
  About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
  Commingled with pansies,
With rue and the beautiful
  Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
  Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
  And the beauty of Annie,

Drowned in a bath
  Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
  She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
  To sleep on her breast,
Deeply to sleep
  From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished
  She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
  To keep me from harm,
To the queen of the angels
  To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly
  Now in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
  That you fancy me dead;
And I rest so contentedly
  Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
  That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
  Thinking me dead.

But my heart is brighter
  Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
  For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
  Of the love of my Annie,
With the thought of the light
  Of the eyes of my Annie.

ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—KORAN.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
  Whose heart-strings are a lute;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
  Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
  In her highest noon,
  The enamored moon
Blushes with love,

While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiades, even,
Which were seven)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings,
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest:
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit;

Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With fervor of thy lute;
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

LENORE

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river;
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear? — weep now or nevermore!
See, on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read, the funeral song be sung:

An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young,
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her — that she died!
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? the requiem how be sung
By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?"

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!
The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with Hope, that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride,—
For her, the fair and debonair, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes;
The life still there, upon her hair, the death upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! avaunt! from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven,—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven,—

From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of Heaven!
Let no bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damnèd Earth!
And I!—to-night my heart is light!—no dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!"

THE BELLS

I

HEAR the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III

Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek.
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire
And a resolute endeavor
Now, now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows
By the twanging
And the clanging
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells
In the jangling
And the wrangling
How the danger sinks and swells,—

By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells;
Of the bells —
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people — ah, the people,
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone —
They are neither man nor woman,
They are neither brute nor human,
They are ghouls;
And their king it is who tolls;

And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells,
Of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells;
Of the bells, bells, bells —
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhymee,
To the rolling of the bells;
Of the bells, bells, bells —
To the tolling of the bells;
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst
and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free,—
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls,
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvelous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and the shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gayly jeweled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea;
No heaving hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave — there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven!
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low;

And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 't is a gala night
  Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
  In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theater, to see
  A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
  The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
  Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly;
  Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
  That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their condor wings
  Invisible Woe!

That motley drama — oh, be sure
  It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore
  By a crowd that seize it not,

Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot;
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude,—
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes — it writhes! — with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out — out are the lights — out all!
And over each quivering form
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

THE HAUNTED PALACE

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace — reared its head.

In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,

A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travelers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh — but smile no more.

THE RAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'T is some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door:
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;— vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'T is some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"— here I opened wide the door:—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore:"
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
" Surely," said I, " surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore:
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door,
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door:
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,—

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said,
"art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the
Nightly shore:
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian
shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so
plainly,
Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy
bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human
being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber
door,
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber
door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke
only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did
outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he
fluttered,
Till I scarcely more than muttered,— "Other friends have
flown before;

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown
before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and
store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful
Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one bur-
den bore:
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden
bore
Of 'Never — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smil-
ing,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and
bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to link-
ing
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of
yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous
bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh, quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —
On this home by Horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore:
Is there — *is* there balm in Gilead? — tell me — tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore,
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting;
"Get thee back into the tempest and the night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from
off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor
Shall be lifted — nevermore!

THE SLEEPER

At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain-top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin molders into rest;

Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All beauty sleeps! — and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her destinies!

O lady bright! can it be right,
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop;
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through my chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully, so fearfully,
Above the closed and fringèd lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall.
O lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor: strange thy dress:
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all-solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold,—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals;
Some sepulcher, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone;
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin,
It was the dead who groaned within!

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad Valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless,
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave; from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep; from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

TO ONE IN PARADISE

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine,—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
  Ah, starry hope that didst arise
But to be overcast!
  A voice from out the future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
  (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
  The light of life is o'er!
  "No more—no more—no more—"
(Such language holds the solemn sea
  To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
  Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
  And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy gray eye glances,
  And where thy footstep gleams,
In what ethereal dances,
  By what eternal streams.

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober;
  The leaves they were crispèd and sere,
  The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October

Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir:
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber;
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll,
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole,
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,
Our memories were treacherous and sere,
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!),
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here),
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn,
As the star-dials hinted of morn,
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous luster was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn,
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said, "She is warmer than Dian;
She rolls through an ether of sighs,
She revels in a region of sighs;
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies,
To the Lethean peace of the skies;
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes,
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said, "Sadly this star I mistrust,
Her pallor I strangely mistrust;
Oh, hasten! — oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly! — let us fly! — for we must."

In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust;
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied, "This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its sibyllic splendor is beaming
With hope and in beauty to-night!
See, it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright;
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That can not but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom,
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb,
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said, "What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied, "Ulalume! Ulalume!—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispèd and sere,
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried, "It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journeyed, I journeyed down here,
That I brought a dread burden down here,
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
This misty mid region of Weir;
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

GEORGE DENISON PRENTICE

(Kentucky: 1802-1870)

THE CLOSING YEAR

'Tis midnight's holy hour — and silence now
Is brooding, like a gentle spirit, o'er
The still and pulseless world. Hark! on the winds,
The bell's deep-notes are swelling. 'Tis the knell
Of the departed year.

No funeral train
Is sweeping past; yet on the stream and wood,
With melancholy light, the moonbeams rest,
Like a pale, spotless shroud; the air is stirred,
As by a mourner's sigh; and on yon cloud
That floats so still and placidly through heaven
The spirits of the seasons seem to stand,—
Young Spring, bright Summer, Autumn's solemn form,
And Winter, with his aged locks,— and breathe
In mournful cadences, that come abroad
Like the far wind harp's wild and touching wail,
A melancholy dirge o'er the dead Year,
Gone from the earth forever.

'Tis a time
For memory and for tears. Within the deep,
Still chambers of the heart a specter dim,
Whose tones are like the wizard voice of Time,
Heard from the tomb of ages, points its cold
And solemn finger to the beautiful
And holy visions that have passed away
And left no shadow of their loveliness
On the dead waste of life. That specter lifts
The coffin-lid of hope, and joy, and love,
And, bending mournfully above the pale
Sweet forms that slumber there, scatters dead flowers
O'er what has passed to nothingness.

. . . . . The year
Has gone, and with it many a glorious throng
Of happy dreams. Its mark is on each brow,
Its shadow on each heart. In its swift course
It waved its scepter o'er the beautiful —
And they are not. It laid its pallid hand
Upon the strong man — and the haughty form
Is fallen, and the flashing eye is dim.
It trod the hall of revelry, where thronged
The bright and joyous — and the tearful wail
Of stricken ones is heard, where erst the song
And reckless shout resounded. It passed o'er
The battle plain, where sword, and spear, and shield
Flashed in the light of midday — and the strength

Of serried hosts is shivered, and the grass,
Green from the soil of carnage, waves above
The crushed and moldering skeleton. It came
And faded like a wreath of mist at eve;
Yet, ere it melted in the viewless air,
It heralded its millions to their home
In the dim land of dreams.

Remorseless Time! —
Fierce spirit of the glass and scythe! — what power
Can stay him in his silent course, or melt
His iron heart to pity? On, still on
He presses, and forever. The proud bird,
The condor of the Andes, that can soar
Through heaven's unfathomable depths, or brave
The fury of the Northern hurricane
And bathe his plumage in the thunder's home,
Furls his broad wings at nightfall and sinks down
To rest upon his mountain crag,— but Time
Knows not the weight of sleep or weariness,
And night's deep darkness has no chain to bind
His rushing pinion. Revolutions sweep
O'er earth, like troubled visions o'er the breast
Of dreaming sorrow; cities rise and sink,
Like bubbles on the water; fiery isles
Spring, blazing, from the ocean, and go back
To their mysterious caverns; mountains rear
To heaven their bald and blackened cliffs, and bow

Their tall heads to the plain; new empires rise,
Gathering the strength of hoary centuries,
And rush down like the Alpine avalanche,
Startling the nations; and the very stars,
Yon bright and burning blazonry of God,
Glitter a while in their eternal depths,
And like the Pleiad, loveliest of their train,
Shoot from their glorious spheres, and pass away,
To darkle in the trackless void; yet Time,
Time, the tomb-builder, holds his fierce career,
Dark, stern, all pitiless, and pauses not
Amid the mighty wrecks that strew his path,
To sit and muse, like other conquerors,
Upon the fearful ruin he has wrought.

MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON

(Virginia: 1820-1897)

FLOOD-TIDE

To every artist, howsoe'er his thought
Unfolds itself before the eyes of men—
Whether through sculptor's chisel, poet's pen,
Or painter's wondrous brush,—there comes, full fraught
With instant revelation, lightning-wrought,
A moment of supremest heart-swell, when
The mind leaps to the tidal crest, and then
Sweeps on triumphant to the harbor sought.

Wait, eager spirit, till the topping waves
Shall roll their gathering strength in one, and lift
From out the swamping trough thy galleon free;
Mount with the whirl, command the rush that raves
A maelstrom round; then proudly shoreward drift,
Rich-freighted as an Indian argosy.

THE ANGEL UNAWARE

Abroad on the landscape pale and cold,
Blurred with a patter of autumn rain,

I gazed, and questioned if it could hold
  Ever the sweet, old joy again.
The color had faded from earth and sky,
  Mists hung low where the light had lain,
And through the willows a fretful sigh
  Moaned as their branches swept the pane.

"My days must darken as these," I said—
  "Out of my life must summer go;
Its russeted memories, dim and dead,
  Shiver along my pathway so;
No more the elastic life comes back—
  The leap of heart and the spirit-glow
That never had sense of loss or lack,
  Whether my lot were glad or no."

But here on my musings broke a child,
  Fresh from a rush in the pinching air;
And, kissing my hand, she gayly smiled,
  Speaking no word, but leaving there
A handful of heart's-ease, blithe and bright.
  What had become of my cloud of care?
It had haloed itself in a ring of light
  Over the angel unaware!

WE TWO

Ah, painful-sweet! how can I take it in!
That somewhere in the illimitable blue
Of God's pure space, which men call Heaven, we two
Again shall find each other, and begin
The infinite life of love, a life akin
To angels,— only angels never knew
The ecstasy of blessedness that drew
Us to each other, even in this world of sin.

Yea, find each other! The remotest star
Of all the galaxies would hold in vain
Our souls apart, that have been, heretofore,
As closely interchangeable as are
One mind and spirit: Oh, joy that aches to pain,
To be together — we two — forever more!

JAMES RYDER RANDALL

(Maryland: 1839-1908)

MY MARYLAND

THE despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother-State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust;
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland!
Come with thy panoplied array,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain—
"*Sic semper!*" 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
Maryland!
Arise in majesty again,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come to thine own heroic throng
Walking with Liberty along,
And chant thy dauntless slogan-song,
Maryland! My Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul.
Maryland! My Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes — she burns! she'll come! she'll come!
Maryland! My Maryland!

IRWIN RUSSELL

(Mississippi: 1853-1879)

THE ORIGIN OF THE BANJO

From "Christmas Night in the Quarters"

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin';
Keep silence fur yo' betters! — don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de 'possum's tail she's gwine to lecter — ladies, listen! —
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r 's missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn,—
Fur Noah tuk the "Herald," an' he read de ribber column,—
An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-cl'arin' timber-patches,
An' 'lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat the steamah Natchez.

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an' a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut wuz gwine to happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob eb'ry sort o' beas'es,—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!
He had a Morgan colt an' seb'ral head o' Jarsey cattle,—
An' druv 'em board de Ark as soon's he heerd de thunder rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain! — it come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drowned out —'cep' Noah an' de critters,
An' men he'd hired to work de boat — an' one to mix de bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' an' a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tell, whut wid all de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an' cussin'.

Now, Ham, de only nigger whut wuz runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse hese'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made — de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on, made bridge an' screws
an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' tap'rin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it;
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to
string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De ha'r's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-
stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as washday-dinner
graces;
An' sorted ob 'em by de size, f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz "Nebber
min' de wedder,"—
She sound' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all together;
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin'; Noah called de
figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob de
niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not
de slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curi's, too, dat's nigger's ways: his people nebber los'
'em,—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de
'possum!

ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN

(Virginia: 1839-1886)

THE CONQUERED BANNER

Furl that Banner, for 'tis weary;
Round its staff 'tis drooping dreary;
  Furl it, fold it,—it is best;
For there's not a man to wave it,
And there's not a sword to save it,
And there's not one left to lave it
In the blood which heroes gave it;
And its foes now scorn and brave it;
  Furl it, hide it—let it rest!

Take that Banner down! 'tis tattered;
Broken is its staff and shattered;
And the valiant hosts are scattered
  Over whom it floated high.
Oh! 'tis hard for us to fold it;
Hard to think there's none to hold it;
Hard that those who once unrolled it
  Now must furl it with a sigh!

Furl that Banner! — furl it sadly!
Once ten thousand hailed it gladly,
And ten thousand wildly, madly,
  Swore it should forever wave;
Swore that foeman's sword should never
Hearts like theirs entwined dissever,
Till that flag should float forever
  O'er their freedom or their grave!

Furl it! for the hands that grasped it,
And the hearts that fondly clasped it,
  Cold and dead are lying low;
And that Banner — it is trailing,
While around it sounds the wailing
  Of its people in their woe.

For, though conquered, they adore it,—
Love the cold, dead hands that bore it,
Weep for those who fell before it,
Pardon those who trailed and tore it;
And, oh! wildly they deplore it,
  Now who furl and fold it so!

Furl that Banner! True, 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story
  Though its folds are in the dust!
For its fame on brightest pages,
Penned by poets and by sages,

Shall go sounding down the ages,—
Furl its folds though now we must.

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly!
Treat it gently — it is holy,
For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not — unfold it never;
Let it droop there, furled forever,—
For its people's hopes are dead!

THE SWORD OF ROBERT LEE

Forth from its scabbard, pure and bright,
Flashed the sword of Lee!
Far in the front of the deadly fight,
High o'er the brave in the cause of Right,
Its stainless sheen, like a beacon light,
Led us to victory!

Out of its scabbard, where, full long,
It slumbered peacefully,
Roused from its rest by the battle's song,
Shielding the feeble, smiting the strong,
Guarding the right, avenging the wrong,
Gleamed the sword of Lee!

Forth from its scabbard, high in air
Beneath Virginia's sky! —
And they who saw it gleaming there,

And knew who bore it, knelt to swear
That where that sword led they would dare
To follow — and to die!

Out of its scabbard! — never hand
Waved sword from stain as free;
Nor purer sword led braver band,
Nor braver bled for a brighter land,
Nor brighter land had cause so grand,
Nor cause a chief like Lee!

Forth from its scabbard! — how we prayed
That sword might victor be!
And when our triumph was delayed,
And many a heart grew sore afraid,
We still hoped on while gleamed the blade
Of noble Robert Lee.

Forth from its scabbard all in vain
Bright flashed the sword of Lee!
'Tis shrouded now in its sheath again,
It sleeps the sleep of our noble slain,
Defeated, yet without a stain,
Proudly and peacefully.

GEORGE HERBERT SASS

(South Carolina: 1845-1908)

IN A KING-CAMBYSES VEIN

Cambyses, King of the Persians,
  Sat with his lords at play
Where the shades of the broad plane-branches
  Slanted athwart the way.

And he listened and heard Prexaspes
  Tell to his fellows there
Of a Bactrian bowman's prowess
  And skill beyond compare.

And the heart of the King was bitter,
  And he turned and said to him:
"Dost see on the greensward yonder
  That plane-tree's slender limb?

"It stands far off in the gloaming—
  Dost think thy Bactrian could
With a single shaft unerring
  Smite through that slender wood?"

"But nay," then said Prexaspes,
"Nor ever a mortal man
Since the days when Nimrod hunted
Where great Euphrates ran."

Then Cambyses, son of Cyrus,
Looked, and before him there
Meres, the King's cupbearer,
Stood where the wine flowed clear.

Meres, the King's cupbearer,
Prexaspes' only son,
And the heart of the King was hardened,
And the will of the King was done.

And he said: "Bind Meres yonder
To the plane-tree's slender stem,
And give me yon sheaf of arrows
And the bow that lies by them."

And so, when the guards had bound him
He drew the shaft to the head;
"Give heed! give heed, Prexaspes,
I aim for the heart!" he said.

Sharp through the twilight stillness
Echoed the steel bow's twang;
Loud through the twilight stillness
The courtiers' plaudits rang.

And the head of the boy drooped downward,
And the quivering shaft stood still;
And the King said: "O, Prexaspes,
Match I thy Bactrian's skill?"

Then low before Cambyses
The Satrap bowed his head—
"O, great King, live forever!
Thou hast cleft the heart!" he said.

JOHN LANCASTER SPALDING

(Kentucky: 1840- ——)

AT THE NINTH HOUR

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?
O sadder than the ocean's wailing moan,
Sadder than homes whence life and joy have flown,
Than graves where those we love in darkness lie;

More full of anguish than all agony
Of broken hearts, forsaken of their own
And left in hopeless misery alone,
Is this, O sweet and loving Christ, Thy cry!

For this, this only is infinite pain:
To feel that God Himself has turned away.
If He abide all loss may still be gain,
And darkest night be beautiful as day.
But lacking Him the universe is vain,
And man's immortal soul is turned to clay.

DEATH'S GRAND AVENUE

The heavens shall grow old; be cast aside
Like out-worn vesture; the great sun shall fail
And all the countless host of stars wax pale
And on the earth no living thing abide!

This is the voice with which the Blessed Saviour cried
To men, who on time's billowy ocean sail,
Trusting their all to bottoms that are frail,
With perishable elements for guide.

This is the truth which science utters too,
Teaching that suns and moons and earth shall die,
That boundless space is death's grand avenue,
Where winds the funeral march of earth and sky.
Is death then the eternal only true,
And life, but a despairing wail, a lie?

THE PRAISE OF MEN

Why wish that men should praise me when I'm dead?
Now all alive I hold their praise is vain.
It can not give content nor deaden pain,
Nor bring the loved who into darkness fled,

Nor widen my life-current's narrow bed,
Nor lift my thought and love to higher plane,
Nor win for me an everlasting gain,
Nor place unfading wreath upon my head.

What need of praise then when my body lies
In silent earth and I to God have flown?
But if, as some have held, the soul too dies
And wholly ceases, like a flame outblown,
To praise the dead is worst of vanities
And meaningless as the dull ocean's moan.

THE SPIRIT OF MORNING

How many a time, just when the sun up-glows,
I gently brush away my own sweet sleep,
And walk into the balmy air, knee-deep
In clover, rich and fragrant as the rose,

Along a little stream which, singing, flows
Beneath o'ershadowing trees whose green boughs keep
Their silent watch, while the young sunbeams peep
Through leaves, to kiss the wave that prattling goes.

O then, I hear the song of birds, the low
Of cattle, and the hum of early bees;
Of fresh-awakened flowers I catch the glow,
And feel the odorous kiss of morning breeze;
The startled air sends forth the cock's shrill crow,
And the whole earth with joyful thoughts agrees.

THE STARRY HOST

THE countless stars, which to our human eye
Are fixed and steadfast, each in proper place,
Forever bound to changeless points in space,
Rush with our sun and planets through the sky,
And like a flock of birds still onward fly;
Returning never whence began their race.
They speed their ceaseless way with gleaming face
As though God bade them win Infinity.

Ah, whither, whither is their forward flight
Through endless time and limitless expanse?
What Power with unimaginable might
First hurled them forth to spin in tireless dance?
What Beauty lures them on through primal night,
So that for them to be is to advance?

FRANK LEBBY STANTON

(South Carolina: 1857-——)

LITTLE ELAINE

WHERE have you gone, little Elaine,
With eyes like violets wet with rain—
Silvery April rain that throws
(Ah, never with eyes as bright as those!)
Melting diamonds over the rose.
You have left me alone, but where have you flown?
God knows, my dear, God knows!

Where have you gone, little Elaine,
With laughing lips of the crimson stain—
Lips that smiled as the sunlight glows
When morning breaks like a white, sweet rose
Over the wearisome winter snows?
Shall I miss their song my whole life long?
God knows, my dear, God knows!

You have left me lonely, little Elaine:
I call to you, but I call in vain;
I sing to you when the twilight throws
Its dying light on my life's last rose,
While the tide of memory ebbs and flows.
Is it God's own will I should miss you still?
God knows, my dear, God knows!

HENRY JEROME STOCKARD

(North Carolina: 1858- ——)

SHAKESPEARE

He heard the Voice that spake and, unafraid,
Beheld at dawning of primeval light
The systems flame to being, move in flight
Unmeasured, unimagined, and unstayed.
He stood at nature's evening and surveyed
Dissolvèd worlds,— saw uncreated night
About the universe's depth and height
Slowly and silently forever laid.
Down the pale avenues of death he trod,
And trembling gazed on scenes of hate that chilled
His blood, and for a breath his pulses stilled,—
Then clouds from sun-bright shores a moment rolled
And blinded glimpsed he One with thunder shod,
Crowned with the stars, and with the morning stoled!

AS SOME MYSTERIOUS WANDERER OF THE SKIES

An some mysterious wanderer of the skies.
Emerging from the deeps of outer dark,
Traces for once in human ken the arc
Of its stupendous curve, then swiftly flies

Out through some orbit veiled in space, which lies
Where no imagination may embark,—
Some onward-reaching track that God did mark
For all eternity beneath his eyes,—
So comes the soul forth from creation's vast;
So clothed with mystery moves through mortal sight;
Then sinks away into the Great Unknown.
What systems it hath seen in all the past,
What worlds shall blaze upon its future flight,
Thou knowest, eternal God, and thou alone!

JOHN BANISTER TABB

(Virginia: 1845-1909)

A CRADLE-SONG

Sing it, Mother! sing it low:
  Deem it not an idle lay.
In heart 't will ebb and flow
  All the life-long way.

Sing it, Mother! softly sing,
  While he slumbers on thy knee;
All that after-years may bring
  Shall flow back to thee.

Sing it, Mother, Love is strong!
  When the tears of manhood fall,
Echoes of thy cradle-song
  Shall its peace recall.

Sing it, Mother! when his ear
  Catcheth first the Voice Divine,
Dying, he may smile to hear
  What he deemeth thine.

FERN SONG

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern,
And spread out your palms again,
  And say, "Tho' the sun
  Hath my vesture spun,
He had labored, alas, in vain,
  But for the shade
  That the Cloud hath made,
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."
  Then laugh and upturn
  All your fronds, little Fern,
And rejoice in the beat of the rain!

KEATS

Upon thy tomb 't is graven, "Here lies one
  Whose name is writ in water." Could there be
  A flight of Fancy fitlier feigned for thee,
A fairer motto for her favorite son?
For, as the wave, thy varying numbers run—
  Now crested proud in tidal majesty,
  Now tranquil as the twilight reverie
Of some dim lake the white moon looks upon

While teems the world with silence. Even there,
  In each Protean rainbow-tint that stains
The breathing canvas of the atmosphere,

We read an exhalation of thy strains.
Thus, on the scroll of Nature, everywhere,
Thy name, a deathless syllable, remains.

MAGADALEN

(After Swinburne)

"She hath done what she could,"
It was thus that He spake of her,
Trembling and pale as the penitent stood.
"And this she hath done shall be told for the sake of her,
Told as embalmed in the gift that I take of her,
Take, as an earnest of all that she would
Who hath done what she could.

"She hath done what she could:
Lo, the flame that hath driven her
Downward, is quenched! and her grief like a flood
In the strength of a rain-swollen torrent hath shriven her:
Much hath she loved and much is forgiven her;
Love in the longing fulfills what it would—
She hath done what she could."

O'ERSPENT

My soul is as a fainting noonday star,
And thou, the absent night;
Haste, that thy healing shadow from afar
May touch me into light.

ON THE FORTHCOMING VOLUME OF SIDNEY LANIER'S POEMS

Snow! Snow! Snow!
Do thy worst, Winter, but know, but know
That, when the Spring cometh, a blossom shall blow
From the heart of the Poet that sleeps below,
And his name to the ends of the earth shall go,
In spite of the snow!

SOLITUDE

Thou wast to me what to the changing year
Its seasons are,—a joy forever new;
What to the night its stars, its heavenly dew,
Its silence; what to dawn its lark-song clear;
To noon, its light—its fleckless atmosphere,
Where ocean and the overbending blue,
In passionate communion, hue for hue,
As one in Love's circumference appear.

O brimming heart, with tears for utterance
Alike of joy and sorrow! lift thine eyes
And sphere the desolation. Love is flown;
And in the desert's widening expanse
Grim Silence, like a sepulchre of stone,
Stands charneling a soul's funereal sighs.

THE BUBBLE

WHY should I stay? Nor seed nor fruit have I,
But, sprung at once to beauty's perfect round,
Nor loss, nor gain, nor change in me is found,—
A life-complete in death-complete to die.

THE DRUID

GODLIKE beneath his grave divinities,
The last of all their worshipers, he stood.
The shadows of a vanished multitude
Enwound him, and their voices in the breeze
Made murmur, while the meditative trees
Reared of their strong fraternal branches rude
A temple meet for prayer. What blossoms strewed
The path between Life's morning hours and these?

What lay beyond the darkness? He alone
The sunshine and the shadow and the dew

Had shared alike with leaf, and flower, and stem:
Their life had been his lesson; and from them
A dream of immortality he drew,
As in their fate foreshadowing his own.

THE PLAINT OF THE ROSE

Said the budding Rose, "All night
Have I dreamed of the joyous light:
How long doth my lord delay!
Come, Dawn, and kiss from mine eyes away
The dewdrops cold and the shadows gray,
That hide thee from my sight!"

Said the full-blown Rose, "O Light!
(So fair to the dreamer's sight!)
"How long doth the dew delay!
Come back, sweet sister shadows gray,
And lead me home from the world away,
To the calm of the cloister Night!"

WILL HENRY THOMPSON

(Georgia: 1848-——)

THE HIGH TIDE AT GETTYSBURG

A CLOUD possessed the hollow field
The gathering battle's smoky shield.
Athwart the gloom the lightning flashed,
And through the cloud some horsemen dashed,
And from the heights the thunder pealed.

Then at the brief command of Lee
Moved out that matchless infantry,
With Pickett leading grandly down,
To rush against the roaring crown
Of those dread heights of destiny.

Far heard above the angry guns
A cry across the tumult runs,—
The voice that rang through Shiloh's woods
And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

Ah, how the withering tempest blew
Against the front of Pettigrew!

A Khamsin wind that scorched and singed
Like that infernal flame that fringed
The Britsh squares at Waterloo!

A thousand fell where Kemper led;
A thousand died where Garnett bled;
In blinding flame and strangling smoke
The remnant through the batteries broke
And crossed the works with Armistead.

"Once more in glory's van with me!"
Virginia cried Tennessee;
"We two together, come what may
Shall stand upon these works to-day!"
(The reddest day in history.)

Brave Tennessee! In reckless way
Virginia heard her comrade say:
"Close round this rent and riddled rag!"
What time she sets her battle-flag
Amid the guns of Doubleday.

But who shall break the guards that wait
Before the awful face of Fate?
The tattered standards of the South
Were shriveled at the cannon's mouth,
And all her hopes were desolate.

In vain the Tennesseean set
His breast against the bayonet!
    In vain Virginia's charged and raged,
    A tigress in her wrath uncaged,
Till all the hill was red and wet!

Above the bayonets, mixed and crossed,
Men saw a gray, gigantic ghost
    Receding through the battle-cloud,
    And heard across the tempest loud
The death cry of a nation lost!

The brave went down! Without disgrace
They leaped to Ruin's red embrace,
    They only heard Fame's thunders wake,
    And saw the dazzling sun-burst break
In smiles on Glory's bloody face!

They fell, who lifted up a hand
And bade the sun in heaven to stand!
    They smote and fell, who set the bars
    Against the progress of the stars,
And stayed the march of Motherland!

They stood, who saw the future come
On through the fight's delirium!
    They smote and stood, who held the hope
    Of nations on that slippery slope
Amid the cheers of Christendom.

God lives! He forged the iron will
That clutched and held that trembling hill.
God lives and reigns! He built and lent
The heights for Freedom's battlement
Where floats her flag in triumph still!

Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules. Her gentler purpose runs.
The mighty mother turns in tears
The pages of her battle years,
Lamenting all her fallen sons!

FRANCIS ORRAY TICKNOR

(Georgia: 1822-1874)

"LITTLE GIFFEN"

Out of the focal and foremost fire,
Out of the hospital walls as dire;
Smitten of grape-shot and gangrene,
(Eighteenth battle, and *he* sixteen!)
Specter! such as you seldom see,
"Little Giffen," of Tennessee!

"Take him and welcome!" the surgeons said;
"Little the doctor can help the dead!"
So we took him; and brought him where
The balm was sweet in the summer air;
And we laid him down on a wholesome bed,—
Utter Lazarus, heel to head!

And we watched the war with abated breath,—
Skeleton Boy against skeleton Death.
Months of torture, how many such?
Weary weeks of the stick and crutch;
And still a glint of the steel-blue eye
Told of a spirit that wouldn't die,

And didn't. Nay, more! in death's despite
The crippled skeleton "learned to write."
"Dear mother," at first, of course; and then
"Dear captain," inquiring about the men.
Captain's answer: "Of eighty-and-five,
Giffen and I are left alive."

Word of gloom from the war, one day;
Johnson pressed at the front, they say.
Little Giffen was up and away;
A tear — his first — as he bade good-by,
Dimmed the glint of his steel-blue eye.
"I'll write, if spared!" There was news of the fight;
But none of Giffen.— He did not write.

I sometimes fancy that, were I king
Of the princely Knights of the Golden Ring,
With the song of the minstrel in mine ear,
And the tender legend that trembles here,
I'd give the best on his bended knee,
The whitest soul of my chivalry,
For "Little Giffen," of Tennessee.

THE SWORD IN THE SEA

The billows plunge like steeds that bear
The knights with snow-white crests;

The sea-winds blare like bugles where
The Alabama rests.

Old glories from their splendor-mists
Salute with trump and hail,
The sword that held the ocean lists
Against the world in mail.

And down from England's storied hills,
From lyric slopes of France,
The old bright wine of valor fills
The chalice of Romance.

For here was Glory's tourney-field,
The tilt-yard of the sea;
The battle-path of kingly wrath,
And kinglier courtesy.

And down the deeps, in sumless heaps,
The gold, the gem, the pearl,
In one broad blaze of splendor, belt
Great England like an earl.

And there they rest, the princeliest
Of earth's regalia gems,
The starlight of our Southern Cross,
The sword of Raphael Semmes.

HENRY TIMROD

(South Carolina: 1829-1867)

AT MAGNOLIA CEMETERY

Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,
Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;
Though yet no marble column craves
The pilgrim here to pause.

In seeds of laurel in the earth
The blossom of your fame is blown,
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
The shaft is in the stone!

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,
And these memorial blooms.

Small tributes! but your shades will smile
More proudly on these wreaths to-day,
Than when some cannon-molded pile
Shall overlook this bay.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
By mourning beauty crowned.

HYMN

[Sung at the consecration of Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, S. C.]

Whose was the hand that painted thee, O Death!
In the false aspect of a ruthless foe,
Despair and sorrow waiting on thy breath,—
O gentle Power! who could have wronged thee so?

Thou rather should'st be crowned with fadeless flowers,
Of lasting fragrance and celestial hue;
Or be thy couch amid funereal bowers,
But let the stars and sunlight sparkle through.

So, with these thoughts before us, we have fixed
And beautified, O Death! thy mansion here,
Where gloom and gladness — grave and garden — mixed,
Make it a place to love, and not to fear.

Heaven! shed thy most propitious dews around!
Ye holy stars! look down with tender eyes,
And gild and guard and consecrate the ground
Where we may rest, and whence we pray to rise.

SONNETS

I

Are these wild thoughts, thus fettered in my rhymes,
Indeed the product of my heart and brain?
How strange that on my ear the rhythmic strain
Falls like faint memories of far off times!
When did I feel the sorrow, act the part,
Which I had striven to shadow forth in song?
In what dead century swept that mingled throng
Of mighty pains and pleasures through my heart?
Not in the yesterday of that still life,
Which I have passed so free and far from strife —
But somewhere in this weary world, I know,
In some strange land, beneath some Orient clime
I saw or shared a martyrdom sublime,
And felt a deeper grief than any later woe.

II

Some truths there be are better left unsaid;
Much is there that we may not speak unblamed.
On words, as wings, how many joys have fled!
The jealous fairies love not to be named.
There is an old-world tale of one whose bed
A genius graced, to all, save him, unknown;
One day the secret passed his lips, and sped
As secrets speed — thenceforth he slept alone.

Too much, oh! far too much is told in books;
Too broad a daylight wraps us all and each.
Ah! it is well that, deeper than our looks
Some secrets lie beyond conjecture's reach.
Ah! it is well that in the soul are nooks
That will not open to the keys of speech.

III

I scarcely grieve, O Nature! at the lot
That pent my life within a city's bounds,
And shut me from thy sweetest sights and sounds.
Perhaps I had not learned, if some lone cot
Had nursed a dreamy childhood, what the mart
Taught me amid its turmoil; so my youth
Had missed full many a stern but wholesome truth.
Here, too, O Nature! in this haunt of Art,
Thy power is on me, and I own thy thrall.
There is no unimpressive spot on earth!
The beauty of the stars is over all,
And Day and Darkness visit every hearth.
Clouds do not scorn us: yonder factory's smoke
Looked like a golden mist when morning broke.

IV

Most men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest

In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.
Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible god, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!

V

Life ever seems as from its present site
It aimed to lure us. Mountains of the past
It melts, with all their crags and caverns vast,
Into a purple cloud! Across the night
Which hides what is to be, it shoots a light
All rosy with the yet unrisen dawn.
Not the near daisies, but yon distant height
Attracts us, lying on this emerald lawn.
And always, be the landscape what it may —
Blue, misty hill, or sweep of glimmering plain —
It is the eye's endeavor still to gain
The fine, faint limit of the bounding day.
God, haply, in this mystic mode, would fain
Hint of a happier home, far, far away!

AMÉLIE RIVES TROUBETZKOY

(Virginia: 1863- ——)

A MOOD

It is good to strive against wind and rain.
  In the keen, sweet weather that autumn brings.
The wild horse shakes not the drops from his mane,
  The wild bird flicks not the wet from her wings,
In gladder fashion than I toss free
  The mist-dulled gold of my bright hair's flag,
  What time the winds on their heel-wings lag,
And all the tempest is friends with me.
None can reach me to wound or cheer;
  Sound of weeping and sound of song —
Neither may trouble me: I can hear
  But the wind's loud laugh, and the sibilant, strong,
Lulled rush of the rain through the sapless weeds.
  O rare, dear days, ye are here again!
  I will woo ye as maidens are wooed of men,—
With oaths forgotten and broken creeds!

Ye shall not lack for the sun's fierce shining —
  With the gold of my hair will I make ye glad;
For your blown, red forests give no repining —
  Here are my lips: will ye still be sad?

Comfort ye, comfort ye, days of cloud,
Days of shadow, of wrath, of blast—
I who love ye am come at last.
Laugh to welcome me! cry aloud!

For wild am I as thy winds and rains—
Free to come and to go as they;
Love's moon sways not the tides of my veins;
There is no voice that can bid me stay.
Out and away on the drenched, brown lea!
Out to the great, glad heart of the year!
Nothing to grieve for, nothing to fear,—
Fetterless, lawless, a maiden free!

BEFORE THE RAIN

The blackcaps pipe among the reeds,
And there'll be rain to follow;
There is a murmur as of wind
In every coign and hollow;
The wrens do chatter of their fears
While swinging on the barley-ears.

Come, hurry, while there yet is time,
  Pull up thy scarlet bonnet.
Now, sweetheart, as my love is thine,
  There is a drop upon it.
So trip it ere the storm-hag weird
Doth pluck the barley by the beard!

Lo! not a whit too soon we're housed;
  The storm-witch yells above us;
The branches rapping on the panes
  Seem not in truth to love us.
And look where through the clover bush
The nimble-footed rain doth rush!

A SONNET

TAKE all of me,— I am thine own, heart, soul,
Brain, body,— all; all that I am or dream
Is thine forever; yea, though space should teem
With thy conditions, I'd fulfill the whole—
Were to fulfill them to be loved of thee.
Oh, love me! — were to love me but a way
To kill me — love me; so to die would be
To live forever. Let me hear thee say
Once only, "Dear, I love thee,"— then all life
Would be one sweet remembrance, thou its king:
Nay, thou art that already, and the strife
Of twenty worlds could not uncrown thee. Bring,
O Time! my monarch to possess his throne
Which is my heart and for himself alone.

BEVERLEY DANDRIDGE TUCKER

(Virginia: 1846-——)

THE RHONE AND THE ARVE

The Rhone has for its source several springs, near the Glacier du Rhone, and flows through the Canton of the Valais, between the parted Alps, until its current is lost in Lake Leman. On one side of the Savoy Alps rise precipitously; on the other side slope the Jorat Hills, terraced with vineyards and cloven, here and there, by valleys and ravines, covered with wild narcissus. At Geneva the Rhone rushes swiftly from the lake, uniting with the Arve a few miles below the town.

The Arve rises in the valley of Chamouni, one of its sources gushing forth from the Sea of Ice at the base of Mount Blanc. It breaks through the valley at the Gorge de Serroz. When it joins the Rhone its snowy waters flow in the same channel with the clear blue waters of the latter, until at last, their colors mingling, they flow on together through the fields of France, to the Mediterranean.

I

Can they ever come together,
Can they meet and kiss each other,
The two rivers Fate has parted? —
Winsome Rhone, who, like a maiden,
In the Valais springs and bubbles,
Like a maiden merry-hearted,
Careless-footed, all unladen
Of Life's troubles; —

II

Eager Arve, that stays and shivers,
But a moment, ere he quivers,
Ere he rushes thro' th' embrasure
Of his icy, dreary prison.
How he shouts in gleeful madness
As he hastens from the glacier
On to where the sun's uprisen
In its gladness!

III

Ah! the Rhone, she swiftly passes,
Down the crags and thro' crevasses,—
None can stay nor follow after; —
But she may not pass on over
The grim Alps that gaze in wonder

Tho' she cry, with merry laughter,
"Let me by, for I've a lover
Over yonder!"

IV

Then she turns, and softly sighing,
Thro' the Valais swiftly hieing,
Past the mountains,—silent wardens,
By the valley kept asunder,—
Flees unheeding clouds that hover,
Thro' the fields and scented gardens,—
And she whispers, "Over yonder
I've a lover!"

V

Ah! the Arve,—the King of mountains
Can not chain his eager fountains
With his snows and ice eternal!—
On he hastens never heeding
Avalanche nor roar of thunder
Murm'ring, through the valley vernal,
"To a river I am speeding,
Over yonder!"

VI

And the Rhone is flowing faster,
In her quest to meet her master,

Who shall help her seek the ocean,—
On — by towns and hamlets turning,
On — by village bridges under,
On — with swift unbroken motion,—
For the lover ever yearning
Over yonder!

VII

Ah! the Rhone, the placid Leman,
Like some fair and treach'rous demon,
Like some fair, relentless ogress,—
As the siren with Ulysses,
By her jealous arts divining,
Tries to bar and stay her progress,
Tries to silence (hush with kisses)
Love's repining!

VIII

And the Alps, whose peaks discover,
On the other side her lover,—
Gray, grim Alps, of love abhorrent! —
Try to keep the lovers parted;
And the lake she's resting under
With her magic stills her torrent,
Till the Arve is broken-hearted,
Over yonder!

IX

But the Jorat, more unbending,
To the lake-side slowly wending,
Tells the river "Would you kiss us,
You may surely pass on over,
Where our vineyards part asunder,
"Thro' our vales of sweet narcissus."
But she answers, "I've no lover
Over yonder!"

X

And the Arve, he hastens ever,
With a restless, strong endeavor,
Thro' the valley mountain-bounded,—
And he hammers, till he crushes
Down his prison's last reliance,—
Till, as when a stag is hounded,
Thro' the rocky gorge he rushes
In defiance!

XI

And the tender, soft beguiling,
Of the fragrant fields and smiling,
And the bell, at matins ringing,
Can not stay his eager flowing;
And the Vesper bell unheeding,

On he glances, lightly singing,
"To my loved one I am going,
I am speeding!"

XII

But the Rhone is bolder, bolder,
For, at last, a something's told her,
That tho' strong the walls that bound her,
Yet the stream of her existence
Is not spent, tho' scarcely moving,—
So she looks and looks beyond her,
With a maiden's fond persistence
In her loving!

XIII

As the fates her love embolden,
She perceives a city olden,
Where the mountains watch no longer.
Then beneath the bridges darting,—
Where the children gaze in wonder,—
On she hastens, swifter, stronger,
As she whispers, "There's no parting
Over yonder!"

XIV

O the rapture rare of meeting,
O the music sweet of greeting,

When at last the barrier's broken!
Now (the weary sun descending)
On the mountain heights in distance
Is the purple flush, the token
Of their wrath as comes the ending
Of resistance.

XV

And now close,— all partings ended,—
In one channel still unblended,
Are the Arve and Rhone together;
Here the water gray and troubled
With the battling fierce with mountains,
But as crystal blue the other
As when first it gushed and bubbled
Sunny fountains.

XVI

But at last their currents merging
After Love's impetuous urging
Flows the river — twain no longer!
And the hand of fate can never
Part the lovers thus united,—
Gentler one, the other stronger,
When their troth for now and ever
They have plighted!

XVII

On — thro' clover-scented meadows,
On — in gloomy mountain shadows,
Flow the wedded streams together;
And they glide with quiet motion,—
Or they speed with roar of thunder,
Whisp'ring oft to one another,
As they seek to reach the ocean,
"Rest is yonder!"

XVIII

Now the current moves more slowly,
With a requiem sad and lowly,
Where the velvet mantle covers
Weary forms in silence sleeping.
Now, as sing and sail the maidens,
In barges near their lovers,
On it courses, ever keeping
Gentle cadence,

XIX

Till the River, young no longer,
Growing wider, deeper, stronger,
Plays its part in Life's endeavor!
And by busy cities flowing,—
On the bosoms Love has mated,

On the bosoms none can sever,—
Are the Vessels coming, going,
Treasure-freighted.

XX

But, at last, the daylight dimmer,—
Lo, the Moon begins to glimmer
On the Ocean over yonder!—
And the streams that sought each other,
In the valley fair and vernal,
And the lovers none could sunder
Find forever, find together
Rest eternal!

SEVERN TEACKLE WALLIS

(Maryland: 1816-1894)

DEJECTION

Oh God! to see the swelling stream
  Of happiness roll on!—
To count the blessed barks, that gleam
In morning's flush and evening's beam,
  Each on its journey gone;
And feel that, by the lonely shore,
  Mine creeps, a laggard, still,
While not a breeze that blew of yore
Comes back, with freshness, as before,
  Its drooping sails to fill!

Oh say not to me, to deride,
  That, of that better day,
In waste, in passion, or in pride,
Unmindful of the fleeting tide,
  I flung the hours away!
Not mine the weakness or the sin
  Of golden chances spurned—
To toil and hope is not to win;

We end not all that we begin,
  Nor gather all we've earned!

There's not a poisoned seed we sow,
  Of folly or of crime,
But surely will to rankness grow,
And bear its certain fruit of woe,
  In its appointed time:
But, from the germs of better things
  We planted in our youth,
How few the flowers that summer flings,
How rare the fruit that autumn brings,
  To bless our trust and truth!

Men hold it ill, at Fate to rail,
  When all is ruled by Heaven;
But when, e'en at our best, we fail,
And, trim we as we will our sail,
  On rocks and shoals we're driven,—
Though we may feel 'tis Heaven's high plan,
  And bend beneath our lot,—
Yet, if we be no more than man,
Resigned we may be, if we can,
  Contented we are not!

THE CURFEW

Ah why, when life's dim eve comes on,
Should hearts, once warm, grow cold?
And why should sighs for feelings gone,
Make up our breath when old?

'Tis true, the happy light that fell
On board and hearth, of yore,
Went out when evening's tyrant bell,
The Curfew's warning bore.

But oh! it is not thus the heart
Should hear the voice of time;
Not thus its cheerful light depart
At sound of evening's chime!

For me, kind fate! forbid that e'er
That dismal tocsin toll,
In whose sad discord I shall hear
The curfew of the soul!

HOWARD WEEDEN

(Alabama: 18—- ——)

MAMMY'S LULLABY

"SWING low, sweet Chariot," low enough
To give some heavenly rest
To dis poor restless little one
Dat sobs on Mammy's breast.

"Swing low, sweet Chariot," wid your load
Of angels snowy drest,
And thow a dream out to de chile
'Most sleep on Mammy's breast.

"Swing low, sweet Chariot," so dat She
May look into de nest,
An' see how sound her baby sleeps
At last,—on Mammy's breast!

THE OLD BOATMAN

I CHANGED my name, when I got free,
To "Mister" like the res',
But now dat I am going Home,
I like de ol' name bes'.

Sweet voices callin' "Uncle Rome,"
Seem ringin' in my ears;
An' swearin' sort o' sociable,
Ol' Master's voice I hears.

De way he used to call his boat,
Across de river: "Rome!
You damn ol' nigger, come an' bring
Dat boat, an' row me home!"

He's passed Heaven's River now, an' soon
He'll call across its foam:
"You, Rome, you damn ol' nigger, loose
Your boat, an' come on Home!"

TWO LOVERS AND LIZETTE

Who, me? in love, an' wid Lizette?
You better b'lieve I ain't;
No sassy gal like dat could give
Dis nigger heart-complaint.

If Gord don't love her more den I,
Den all I got to say
Is, dat her soul's in danger sho',
An' she had better pray!

It's her, dat is in love wid me;
An' I jes laughs an' tell her,
"De fruit dat drops d'out bein' shook
Is sho' to be too meller!"

But all de same, you talks too much
To suit me, 'bout Lizette:
Some gent'man's nigger gwine get hurt
About dat same gal yet!

AMELIA COPPUCK WELBY

(Maryland: 1819-1852)

TWILIGHT AT SEA

THE twilight hours like birds flew by,
As lightly and as free;
Ten thousand stars were in the sky,
Ten thousand on the sea;
For every wave, with dimpled face,
That leaped upon the air,
Had caught a star in its embrace
And held it trembling there.

JOHN ALLAN WYETH

(Alabama: 1845-——)

MY SWEETHEART'S FACE

My kingdom is my sweetheart's face,
And these the boundaries I trace:
Northward her forehead fair;
Beyond a wilderness of auburn hair;
A rosy cheek to east and west;
  Her little mouth,
  The sunny south,
It is the south that I love best.

Her eyes, two crystal lakes,
  Rippling with light,
Caught from the sun by day,
  The stars by night.
  The dimples in
  Her cheeks and chin
Are snares which Love hath set,—
  And I have fallen in!

TO MY MOTHER

DEAL gently with her, Time! these many years
Of life have brought more smiles with them than tears.
Lay not thy hand too harshly on her now,
But trace decline so slowly on her brow
That (like a sunset of the northern clime,
Where twilight lingers in the summer time,
And fades at last into the silent night,
Ere one may note the passing of the light)
So may she pass — since 'tis the common lot —
As one who, resting, sleeps, and knows it not.

MARTHA YOUNG

(Alabama: 18— - ——)

GOD'S LI'L' JEWELRY

WHO done tangle up Mammy's yarn,
Playin' cat's-cradle by de ole barn—
Makin' crow's-foot and eyes and mo'—
Mangle de thread so Mam' can't sew?
(Bless dat chile!
Laughin' at Mammy all de while—)
God ain't made no whiter pearl
Dan yo' teef, my li'l' girl,
Mostes' precious thing to me—
My chile 's God's Li'l' Jewelry.

Who dat took Mammy's thimble now?
Been cuttin' biscuits, I allow;
Nice li'l' biscuits for us to eat;
Dat chile's cookin' taste mighty sweet.
(Bless dat chile!
Peepin' at Mammy all de while.)
God ain't got no turquoise blue
Deeper'n dese eyes. My Honey, you
Cost'est thing round here I see—
What cost mo'n God's Jewelry?

Done took Mam's handk'cher, what you think?
De while I's takin' forty wink;
Made a swing out it on dat tree,
Mam's keys rockin', like dolls, I see.
(I be boun'!
Best not drap noddin', *she* aroun'!)
God ain't paint no ruby red
As dis baby's lips foresaid—
What my li'l' girl 'd ruther be
Dan des God's Li'l' Jewelry?

Who dat pick up Mammy's ole shoe?
Made a boat out it—hew-ew-whew!
Dar in de washtub floatin' roun'!
Mistifis chile, I do be boun'—
(Bless de chile!
Curls all wet up now dis while.)
God ain't got no shinin' gole
Brighter 'n dis chile's hair do hol'.
Babe, you's des clean heavenly,
'Caze you's God's Li'l' Jewelry.

Now what you done wid Mammy's 'specs?
Lawsy me! What'll you do nex'?
Yoked de kittens wid Mammy's specs!
Dat's mos' enough to git me vex.'
(Bless dis chile!

A-kissin' Mammy all dis while.)
God ain't got no diamond dye
Brighter'n light of dis chile's eye.
Yas; dem angels done agree
Dat you *is* God's Jewelry.

INDEX OF TITLES

		PAGE
Adrift	*Morris*	133
"Ah, Si Jeunesse Savait!"	*A. C. Gordon*	58
Angel Unaware, The	*Preston*	202
Annabel Lee	*Poe*	159
As Some Mysterious Wanderer of the Skies	*Stockard*	224
At Anchor	*W. H. Hayne*	76
At Magnolia Cemetery	*Timrod*	239
At the Ninth Hour	*Spalding*	219
Attributes	*Cawein*	31
Autumn Breeze, An	*W. H. Hayne*	77
Ballad of Trees and the Master, A	*Lanier*	96
Beautiful-Bosomed, O Night	*Cawein*	32
Before the Rain	*Troubetzkoy*	245
Bells, The	*Poe*	170
Bessie Brown, M.D.	*Peck*	146
Bivouac of the Dead, The	*O'Hara*	138
Bridal Ballad	*Poe*	161
Bride, The	*McNeill*	119
Bubble, The	*Tabb*	230
By the Grave of Henry Timrod	*P. H. Hayne*	70
Cavalier's Serenade, The	*Bradenbaugh*	28
Childless	*Morris*	133
Christmas Hymn, A	*McNeill*	116
City in the Sea, The	*Poe*	175
Closing Year, The	*Prentice*	198
Comparison, A	*P. H. Hayne*	68
Condemned, The	*Howland*	86
Conquered Banner, The	*Ryan*	212
Conqueror Worm, The	*Poe*	177
Cradle-Song, A	*Tabb*	226
Curfew, The	*Wallis*	259
Cyclone at Sea, A	*W. H. Hayne*	76
Dawn	*McNeill*	118

		PAGE
Dead Moon, The	*Dandridge*	43
Death's Grand Avenue	*Spalding*	220
Dejection	*Wallis*	257
Dollie	*Peck*	148
Dream Within a Dream, A	*Poe*	158
Drifting Petal, A	*Fenollosa*	51
Druid, The	*Tabb*	230
Duty	*Hubner*	89
Edgar Allan Poe	*Bruce*	30
Enise	*A. C. Gordon*	60
Evening Song, An	*Lanier*	97
Exiles	*W. H. Hayne*	77
Fairy Camp, The	*Dandridge*	46
Fame	*Hubner*	90
Fern Song	*Tabb*	227
Few Days Off, A	*McNeill*	117
Flood-Tide	*Preston*	202
For Annie	*Poe*	162
Four Feet on a Fender	*A. C. Gordon*	62
Gather Leaves and Grasses	*Boner*	23
God's Li'l Jewelry	*Young*	266
Gossips, The	*Crockett*	38
Grapevine Swing, The	*Peck*	151
Haunted Palace, The	*Poe*	178
Health, A	*Pinkney*	155
High Tide at Gettysburg, The	*Thompson*	232
Hymn	*Timrod*	240
Hymn to Spiritual Desire	*Cawein*	34
I'm Growing Old	*Hubner*	88
In a King-Cambyses Vein	*Sass*	216
Israel	*Morris*	136
Israfel	*Poe*	166
Keats	*Tabb*	227
Last Night, The	*Dandridge*	46

PAGE
Last Night at Appomattox, The ....*Page* 142
Lenore ....*Poe* 168
Lillian's Fan ....*Peck* 149
Little Elaine ....*Stanton* 223
Little Giffen ....*Ticknor* 236
Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet, A. .*P. H. Hayne* 68
Lorraine ....*J. L. Gordon* 65
Lovely Peggy ....*Jefferson* 92

Magdalen ....*Tabb* 228
Mammy's Lullaby ....*Weeden* 260
Marshes of Glynn, The ....*Lanier* 108
Miyoko San ....*Fenollosa* 52
Mocking-Bird, The ....*P. H. Hayne* 74
Mood, A ....*Troubetzkoy* 244
Moon-Loved Land, The ....*Boner* 25
My Maryland ....*Randall* 205
My Study ....*P. H. Hayne* 74
My Sweetheart's Face ....*Wyeth* 264

October in Tennessee ....*Malone* 126
O'erspent ....*Tabb* 229
Old Boatman, The ....*Weeden* 260
Old Photograph, An ....*Fenollosa* 51
On a Bust of Mendelssohn ....*W. H. Hayne* 78
On the Forthcoming Volume of Sidney Lanier's Poems
Tabb 229
Opportunity ....*Malone* 127
Origin of the Banjo ....*Russell* 209
Orion ....*Crockett* 37

Plaint of the Rose, The ....*Tabb* 231
Poem, for the unveiling of the bust of Sidney Lanier, at Macon, Ga., October 17, 1890....*W. H. Hayne* 78
Praise of Men, The ....*Spalding* 220

Rattlesnake, The ....*McNeill* 120
Raven, The ....*Poe* 180
Remembrance ....*Boner* 24
Remembrance ....*Morris* 137
Rhone and the Arve, The ....*Tucker* 248

		PAGE
Said the Rose	*Miles*	129
Scandal	*W. H. Hayne*	80
Serenade, The	*Pinkney*	157
Shakespeare	*Stockard*	224
Sleeper, The	*Poe*	188
Solitude	*Tabb*	229
Song of the Chattahoochee	*Lanier*	97
Sonnet	*P. H. Hayne*	73
Sonnet, A	*Troubetzkoy*	247
Sonnets	*Timrod*	241
Spirit of Morning, The	*Spalding*	221
Starry Host, The	*Spalding*	222
Star-Spangled Banner, The	*Key*	94
Stonewall Jackson's Way	*Palmer*	143
Sunrise	*Lanier*	99
Sunrise on the Hills of Satsuma	*Fenollosa*	53
Sweet Little Fool, The	*Boner*	26
Sword in the Sea, The	*Ticknor*	237
Sword of Robert Lee, The	*Ryan*	214
That Little Chap of Mine	*Morris*	135
Three Summer Studies	*Hope*	82
To a Lily	*Legaré*	114
To Helen	*Poe*	192
To My Mother	*Wyeth*	265
To One in Paradise	*Poe*	192
Trifles	*McNeill*	122
Twilight at Sea	*Welby*	263
Twilight in the Woods	*Dandridge*	48
Two Lovers and Lizette	*Weeden*	261
Two Pictures	*McNeill*	124
Ulalume	*Poe*	193
Unborn, The	*Finch*	55
Valentine	*McNeill*	123
Valley of Unrest, The	*Poe*	191
We Two	*Preston*	204
When We Were Twenty-One	*Huber*	90

PAGE
Wife, The ..... *McNeill* 121
Wind, The ..... *Crockett* 41
Witch in the Glass, The ..... *Piatt* 154
World, The ..... *Hubner* 89
Worship ..... *Crockett* 41

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Abroad on the landscape pale and cold, 202.
A cloud possessed the hollow field, 232.
A golden pallor of voluptuous light, 74.
Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever! 168.
Ah! how she trembles when the night is long, 46.
Ah, painful-sweet! how can I take it in! 204.
Ah why, when life's dim eve comes on, 259.
A little while (my life is almost set!), 68.
Are these wild thoughts, thus fettered in my rhymes, 241.
As one who strays from out some shadowy glade, 73.
As some mysterious wanderer of the skies, 224.
A throat of thunder, a tameless heart, 76.
At midnight, in the month of June, 188.

Beautiful-bosomed, O Night, in thy moon, 32.
Bonny Lorraine, have you forgot, 65.

Cambyses, King of the Persians, 216.
Can they ever come together, 249.
Coiled like a clod, his eyes the home of hate, 120.
Come, stack arms, men; pile on the rails, 143.

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern, 227.
Deal gently with her, Time! these many years, 265.
Dear, do not dream I have forgotten thee, 137.

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? 219.
Executor of God's almighty will! 89.

Far blacker than a raven's wings, 80.
Far, far away, beyond a hazy height, 126.
Forth from its scabbard, pure and bright, 214.
Furl that Banner, for 'tis weary, 212.

Gather leaves and grasses, 23.
Glooms of the life-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven, 108.
Go bow thy head in gentle spite, 114.

Godlike beneath his grave divinities, 230.
Go 'way fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin', 209.

Had Youth but known some years ago, 58.
Hear the sledges with the bells, 170.
He heard the Voice that spake and, unafraid, 224.
Helen, thy beauty is to me, 192.
His high-arched brow and quiet eyelids seem, 78.
Hopes grimly banished from the heart, 77.
How many a time, just when the sun up-glows, 221.

I ain't gwine a work till my dyin' day, 117.
I am weary of the garden, 129.
I asked, "What is the world?" and you replied, 89.
I changed my name, when I got free, 260.
If I, athirst by a stream, should kneel, 51.
I fill this cup to one made up, 155.
I know I'm just an ordinary, easy-goin' cuss, 135.
I'm growing old; and yet no fear, 88.
In Death's dark wood two cedars stood, 38.
In Heaven a spirit doth dwell, 166.
In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain, 99.
In the greenest of our valleys, 178.
Into the woods my Master went, 96.
I saw the daughters of the Dawn come dancing o'er the hills, 31.
Is it worth while to barter life for Fame? 90.
I think, ofttimes, that lives of men may be, 68.
I think that we retain of our dead friends, 24.
It is anthracite coal, and the fender is low, 62.
It is good to strive against wind and rain, 244.
It was many and many a year ago, 159.
I was a fool! 26.

Little fan, of fluff and pearl, 149.
Lo! Death has reared himself a throne, 175.
Look off, dear love, across the sallow sands, 97.
Look out upon the stars, my love, 157.
Lo! 'tis a gala night, 177.

Mother of visions, with lineaments dulcet as numbers, 34.

My kingdom is my sweetheart's face, 264.
My love was like a buoyant boat, 76.
"My mother says I must not pass," 154.
My soul is as a fainting noonday star, 229.

Near where the shepherds watched by night, 116.
No lovelier song was ever heard, 25.
Not where men congregate to talk of God, 41.

Oh God! to see the swelling stream, 257.
Oh! say, can you see by the dawn's early light, 96.
Once it smiled a silent dell, 191.
Once more I'll tune the vocal shell, 92.
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary, 180.
One sits in soft light, where the hearth is warm, 124.
Out from its casket of pungent calf, 51.
Out of the focal and foremost fire, 236.
Out of the hills of Habersham, 97.

Read me no moral, priest, upon my life, 86.

Said the budding Rose, "All night," 230.
"She hath done what she could," 228.
She sports a witching gown, 148.
She stands among the nations of the earth, 135.
Sing it, Mother! sing it low, 226.
Sleep sweetly in your humble graves, 240.
Snare me the soul of a dragon-fly, 51.
Snow! Snow! Snow! 229.
Sometimes, when after years of vain regret, 133.
"Swing low, sweet Chariot," low enough, 260.

Take all of me,—I am thine own, heart, soul, 247.
Take this kiss upon the brow! 158.
Thank Heaven! the crisis, 162.
The billows plunge like steeds that bear, 237.
The blackcaps pipe among the reeds, 245.
The cock hath crowed. I hear the doors unbarr'd, 82.
The countless stars, which to our human eye, 222.
The day unfolds like a lotus bloom, 53.
The despot's heel is on thy shore, 205.

The heavens shall grow old; be cast aside, 220.
The hills again reach skyward with a smile, 118.
The hour for praise has come again, 48.
The little white bride is left alone, 119.
The muffled drum's sad roll has beat, 138.
The ring is on my hand, 161.
The skies they were ashen and sober, 193.
The sleeping echoes of her quiet room, 133.
The splendor of Silence,— of snow-jeweled hills and of ice, 37.
The twilight hours like birds flew by, 263.
The way of the wind is a strange, wild way, 41.
They do me wrong who say I come no more, 127.
They locked him in a prison cell, 121.
This gentle and half melancholy breeze, 77.
This is my world! within these narrow walls, 74.
This is the time for birds to mate, 123.
Thou art my very own, 55.
Thou wast all that to me, love, 192.
Thou wast to me what to the changing year, 229.
Time weighs the destinies that men befall, 30.
'Tis midnight's holy hour — and silence now, 198.
To every artist, howsoe'er his thought, 202.
'Twas April when she came to town, 146.

Unveil the noble brow, the deep-souled eyes, 78.
Upon thy tomb 'tis graven, "Here lies one," 227.

Very fair you are, Enise, 60.

We are ghost-ridden, 43.
West — ebbing day, 142.
What did I see in the woods to-day? 46.
What shall I bring you, sweet! 122.
When I was a boy on the old plantation, 151.
When last we parted — thy frail hand in mine, 70.
When we were twenty-one, O Life, 90.
Where have you gone, little Elaine, 223.
Who done tangle up Mammy's yarn, 266.
Who, me? in love, an' wid Lizette? 261.
Whose was the hand that painted thee, O Death! 239.

Why should I stay? Nor seed nor fruit have I, 230.
Why wish that men should praise me when I'm dead? 220.

Yon silent star his flashing shield, 28.

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